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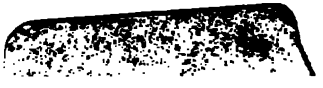
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# INFLUENCE:

## A MORAL TALE

## FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY A LADY.

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He who acts from principle shall be exposed to no wounds but what Religion can cure.—BLAIR.

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TO

MISSES EMMA AND MARIA HANKIN,

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR;

AS A TOKEN OF SINCERE REGARD,

AND AS A SIMPLE TESTIMONY OF THE

GRATITUDE, WITH WHICH

SHE WILL EVER REMEMBER

THE KINDNESS OF HER BEST FRIENDS,

THE FAMILY AT NEWLANDS.

# PREFACE.

In offering to the public a story founded on the subject of Influence, I wish the power were mine to do justice to one of so much importance; but I hope that the presumption of such an attempt will be pardoned in the circumstances which have compelled the undertaking.

Yet, to a world, in which criticism justly holds a powerful barrier against all who may intrude talents incompetent for the task of authorship, some apology is surely necessary, while I seem to claim a privilege to which I can hold not the smallest pretension.

In timidly soliciting its support, therefore, I also ask the generous indulgence of such as may be jealous of the feeble spark, which

shall thus dare to mingle in the blaze of talent, which distinguishes this age of literature and science. And should the tenacious eye of criticism chance to fall upon my humble page, and demand the birth, parentage, and education of so unwarranted an intruder; I can only answer, that it is from the pen of a young and inexperienced writer; that necessity was its mother, and a sick room the school in which it was first reared. Compelled therefore to seek the patronage of the public, I ask its indulgence, not its praise;—its mercy, not its justice. But if indeed so unworthy a theme should be made one of argument, and all the errors of my work be exposed, to counteract the intention of its moral, I can but own, how wide a field its many faults may open for such an attempt; how much of inconsistency, inelegance of language, and inaccuracy of judgment, may justify the censure of a critic: but, so far as the ground on which Religion stands, I trust it will be found clear from all false principle and unwarranted prejudice, since in all that I

have endeavoured to inculcate of faith and practice, Scripture is the authority, and the simple religion of the Gospel as it is in Jesus Christ, the only chart, which I would offer to every young reader, as the sole and sure guide to christianity and happiness.

It has, however, often been remarked, that a work of imagination, as being a mere ideal world, ought never to bear the sacred stamp of Religion. I confess—and with reverence may I use the simile—that it is indeed too hallowed an instrument to mingle indiscriminately with the songs of fancy, and it were well if the rising generation were taught only to listen to such strains as might raise the soul to the enjoyment of holier contemplations. Human nature is, however, in every age and country the same; selfish pleasures are sought with avidity both by young and old, and too often, I fear, the more essential pursuits of a christian education are neglected.

If then a "moral tale" can be made a vehicle of religious influence, as well as of amusement, are we to exclude the benefits

which it *may* produce, because religion and morality are, by some, erroneously supposed to claim adistinct dominion?

Many parents exclaim against novel reading, and would very properly exclude all romances from the libraries of their children; yet, there is scarcely a young woman, who at eighteen is not conversant with every novel of the last two or three years' standing. How then can this problem be solved? Is every girl so deep an adept in the art of deceit as to have contrived to read "slyly" the prohibited books in question; or do parents relax, and countenance what they still condemn? We cannot think so slightly of either party; but, the line is perhaps so drawn between the different classes of novels, that those which are founded on history seem to claim a sort of precedence, and no matter how many high-wrought scenes of fancy are intermingled with a few sober facts of ancient record, provided that the whole conveys historical information, which seems to justify the parent in giving to the child the very cup, of

which the poison is only sweetened—not counteracted; and, ah! how many a young mind is injured, not to say tainted, by the fatal sophistry which they thus imbibe. Life is drawn in colors, which life can never realise; error is made interesting, and almost pleasing, since its result is more frequently that of happiness than of reformation and repentance; or if indeed a reformation be effected, it is unaccompanied by that discipline, which the contrite heart *must* undergo, if the contrition be sincere, and such as to ensure the promised peace ever attached to genuine penitence.

Vain is our moral if it lead not to the source which sanctifies it; and yet how often is that very seriousness condemned, and those who would endeavour to accept it, at once alarmed by the epithet of—Methodist!—an opprobrium so dreaded by every young mind, that they are induced to reject the good they would fain pursue, lest they should be shunned as too *sanctified* for the society of the *world*, where religion is, alas! too often considered as *ill-timed* on

a week-day, and religious books only food for fanaticism and melancholy!

Were this not a truth, and a sad one it is, then indeed, I could only wish that every writer had the pen of Mrs. Hannah More, with a mind like hers to guide it; that the libraries of youth might be filled only with the pure and unsophisticated language of divine truth, undisguised by fancy and free from the ornaments of imagination.

But as serious writings are too frequently thrown aside for the "more convenient season" of old age, let every christian author of "Tales for young people" continue to render imagination subservient to improvement as well as to recreation, and may every young reader of the works of a Taylor, or a Sandham, be enabled to receive and cherish the morals they convey, and imbibe the love of holiness they are calculated to impart.

To those also of a more serious class, who, though from far different motives, might equally censure the attempt to mingle

sentiments of piety with fancy, I would plead in extenuation, that as religion is with us all a *new life*, its teachers must not expect the infant christian to "run before he has learnt to walk;" he must first be allured to its pleasures, before he is led to its difficulties. For though christianity is truly a "path of pleasantness and peace," yet the road which leads to it is "strait and narrow;" and who, that is in the least experienced in its discipline, will not own it to be a warfare, since human nature must be subdued before it can be fitted to receive the seeds of righteousness?—but if its fruits be once tasted, and its results believed, every difficulty will gladly be encountered, and that blessing, "which passeth all understanding," shall rest upon the endeavour, strenuously exerted to obey its precepts.

C. A.

*Forty Hill, Enfield,*
*Feb.* 11, 1822.

# INFLUENCE.

## CHAPTER I.

"Good bye, my pretty Tiny; when I come back to Berwyns, I shall play and run about with you again, and love you just as I do now: I wish you were going with me, but you will be very happy with Johnson," said little Ellen, as she caressed her favorite spaniel, who, unconscious that it was a farewell greeting, gambolled by the side of his young play-fellow; while she, running from tree to tree, bade every favorite flower "good bye," with that light heart, which did not comprehend how sadness could be attached to the idea of leaving a place of which she had seen quite enough, for a new world, where she was to

meet novelty in every thing. Berwyns had been her birth-place, and to that hour she had never slept from its roof. Bred amid the wilds of Llanvair, a small village in the north of Merionethshire, she knew every shrub, stone, hill, and dale, within many miles of its neighbourhood, and now only longed to see something beyond those sweet mountains she was about to quit, perhaps for ever! Her mother's voice hastened her to the spot where every thing appeared ready for their departure; but when she saw her faithful Johnson, standing by the hall door with eyes full of tears, her little heart for the first time felt heavy, and forgetting all her airy castles in the regret of leaving so endeared a friend, she threw her arms affectionately round the neck of her nurse, and exclaimed half mournfully, "Dear, dear Johnson, don't cry; mamma says that you shall soon come and see us in England, and when I am grown up, I shall come again to Berwyns, and then I will give you a cow, and a pig; and you know Herbert is to bring you a great, great

many things from India, for your cottage; so don't cry, for *indeed* we shall never forget you."

"Heaven grant it," was all the poor creature ventured to reply; for being past the zenith of life, she could scarcely expect to see the years to which her darling looked forward, and now only thought of those happy days which were thus so sadly closed: for the sake of her mistress, however, she endeavoured to conceal how much she was affected by the present scene; and not daring to give vent to her feelings, she silently prest the little Ellen to her bosom, and endeavoured to hope that they were not parting for ever. Mrs. Irwyn now coming down stairs, enquired if every thing was in the carriage, and desiring Ellen and Russell, the only servant who was to accompany her, to get in, she mournfully took leave of the rest, and pressing Johnson's hand, in token of her grateful remembrance and esteem, hastily followed her child, and desired the postillion to "drive on."

Poor Johnson stood with the corner of

her apron in her hand, regardless of every sound but the rumbling of the wheels, as if it would have been a crime to suffer any other to disturb the deathlike silence which followed; but when she had caught the last glimpse of the chaise, and the last sound had died along the valley of St. Llenard's, she turned to the deserted hall, and sinking on a chair, gave free vent to her feelings in a burst of tears: "Oh, that I should have lived to see such a day as this! to be sure I thought that I should have staid with my dear mistress, till that sweet baby should close these poor eyes for a better world; but now I must go, a lonely creature, without—but God forgive me, sinful woman that I am, and make me more thankful for all His blessings, for I have a home, thanks to my poor master, when thousands are turned out of happy places without one!" So saying she submissively arose, and collecting the keys, which for ten years had been in her charge, went to deliver them to the man waiting as trustee for their new owner, and taking Tiny in her arms, she

gave a last look to all around her, bent her steps towards St. Llenard's to take possession of her humble dwelling; and as she closed the last great gate, declared that she would never put her foot within the walls of Berwyns again: "no, not she, nor even *look* at it, if she could but stop up the only window of her cot that looked towards the Park."

Mrs. Irwyn, the moment she was seated in the carriage, threw herself back, and hiding her face with both her hands, would not allow herself to give one look on that sweet home where she had passed the happiest moments of her life. Ellen, too much accustomed to see her mother melancholy, scarcely heeded the tears which fell from her eyes; silenced by them only for a few moments, she kissed her hand; then going to the opposite window, began talking of all that she was to see, till on turning from the Priory she exclaimed, "Oh! mamma, there's Mr. Seymour and dear Fanny. I wish I could speak to them; they are kis-

sing their hands from the study window. Oh! now I can't see them any more; good bye Fanny, good bye; I shall soon write to you. Oh! mamma, how much I shall have to tell her all about towns, and cities, and streets. Oh, how I wish Fanny could go with me!" All this was said in a few minutes; but St. Llenard's was now lost to them; and having past the glen of Calwan, the last of the village, and no longer in sight of Llanvair, Berwyns, or St. Llenard's Priory, Mrs. Irwyn raised her head from her hands, and earnestly ejaculating, "Thank Heaven!" she seemed as if released from some dreadful oppression, and felt thankful in having so soon passed over the land to which all that had been dear to her was so immediately attached. She became therefore perfectly calm, and had any who knew the tenor of her mind then seen her, they would scarcely have observed that she had been particularly agitated, or was more depressed than usual. Ellen soon resumed all her thoughtless gaiety of

spirits, and jumping upon Russell's knee, in the course of a few hours talked herself fast asleep.

But while our travellers pursue a three days' journey to Hampshire, we may take a short sketch of Mrs. Irwyn's history. She was of French extraction: her father, Count Julian de Roville, owing to some family disgrace never publicly known, fled from his native country in the early part of the last century, to seek shelter in Wales, where he was certain of finding a friend in Lady Warton, with whom he had once been intimate; and notwithstanding the difference of their religion, he felt sure that no prejudice would actuate her conduct where misfortune claimed her benevolence. He had, however, scarcely been there a twelve-month, when anxiety of mind brought on apoplexy, of which he suddenly died, leaving Adeline, his only surviving child, then about fourteen, to the guardianship of Lady Warton. Thus she became an inmate of Llanvair Hall; and meeting with every indulgence from her benefactress

which her orphan situation demanded, she became reconciled to the change, and almost forgot that Llanvair was not her paternal home.

Lady Warton was one of those who acted towards her fellow-creatures from the principle of universal charity. Her children looked up to her as one whom they feared only in giving offence, and loved to please as securing to themselves that tenderness and approbation which formed their greatest delight. She was firmly attached to the Church of England, but her hand was alike extended to bestow relief on all who needed it, whether they were protestant or catholic, rich or poor; for it was enough that the power was hers to bestow it, that she gratefully accepted the privilege of so doing in the name of Him, from whom she knew that she should receive tenfold the blessings she gave to others for His sake. She was left a rich orphan, and at eighteen married Sir James Warton, a man of profligate habits and bad principles: thus was her happiness early

sacrificed to the tyrannical temper of a cruel husband.

She was naturally of a high and impetuous disposition, but misfortune had now mellowed it; and religion, to which affliction had led her, supplied those Christian graces which can alone be derived from so pure a source. Thus schooled to resignation and forbearance, she possessed that fortitude in her own, and consideration for the sorrows of others, which the experience of affliction perhaps can alone effect. She had indeed early imbibed religious principles from her mother; and often when yielding to the impulse of grief, the remembrance of her affectionate counsels would cross her mind.

On the decease of that excellent parent, she was so young that she could but faintly recall any traces either of her features or person; but she well remembered a scene, from which she dated her first impression of piety: it occurred about a year previous to her mother's death, who, upon the loss of an only boy, remained for some days

absorbed in grief. It was at this time that Lady Warton, then about six years old, went one morning into her mother's room, and saw her take down a large book from the shelf on which it always rested, and after reading it for some time she kissed her child, bidding her kneel down to praise God with her for the mercies still spared to them; after which she appeared more resigned and cheerful for the remainder of the day. The next morning Fanny again found her mother reading the same book; traces of tears were still upon her cheek, but silenced by the scene, she forbore speaking until her mother had finished reading, when, running up to her, she exclaimed, "Now, dear mamma, you will not cry any more to-day:" struck by the remark, her mother caught her in her arms, and Lady Warton never forgot the bright countenance with which she replied, "No, my child, and when you have learnt to read and understand that Bible, you will be happy also; for it will lead you to Him who has borne our sorrows, and will wipe all tears from

our eyes." She could not then comprehend the meaning of her mother's words, but the impression which they left upon her mind was never lost: so much may the influence of a parent's example affect the whole life and welfare of children!

On the death of her husband, Lady Warton sold her house in Gloucester Place, and left London, determined to pass the remainder of her life on her estate in Wales, where she retired with her children, resolved to shield these little treasures from the fascinations of a world, which, in her youth, had held out such fallacious charms, and fatally allured her to so much misery. Grateful for the many blessings now granted her, she never forgot to whose bounty she was indebted for their possession; and while enjoying them, failed not to evince her sense of the divine goodness, by the performance of those duties most acceptable to her heavenly Father. Thus she became the patroness and parent of her little village, and a benefactress to all who needed her assistance or care. While be-

stowing happiness to all around her, she enjoyed within herself that tranquil tenor of mind, which can only dwell with one so tempered; but still hers was more peace than happiness, for time had only softened, not removed, the remembrance of her early trials; so that she might be said to joy rather in submission to the will of God, than in a life over which prosperity now seemed to scatter its brightest flowers: but for happiness—she awaited patiently till she might receive it in those realms of future glory, where, in full confidence of the promises of her Redeemer, her heart now rested, convinced that there only the Christian could find "a rest from labor." Yet at all times she was so serenely cheerful, that those who knew not the "intimacy of her mind," declared that "Lady Warton must be the happiest woman, and Llanvair Hall the happiest place, in the world."

She had only two daughters, Julia and Althea, who being of nearly the same age as Adeline, soon became as sisters to her. Julia, who was her favorite, was a sweet,

mild girl, and so completely was Adeline swayed by her influence, that in all things she rested on her judgment rather than her own, though perhaps more from indolence of disposition than affection; for, left to herself, she was cold and selfish, and was scarcely known to express a feeling of gratitude, although so constantly receiving benefits, which might have excited it in the strongest degree in hearts differently constituted. Adeline married Mr. Irwyn when scarcely nineteen: he had been fascinated by her beauty, and although he could not be blind to her faults, yet his romantic heart formed the scheme, always easy to a lover, of making her all he wished, and establishing in her character that strength of principle which he felt so essential to his happiness and to the future mother of a family. She had, under the influence of Lady Warton, embraced the protestant faith; but still she often wavered in her views of religion, which was a source of real uneasiness to Mr. Irwyn, who, however, hoped all things from the experience of the comfort which

she would find attached to the duties of Christianity. Berwyns, his estate, was therefore without delay prepared, and Dr. Herbert, his guardian, invited down to witness so "prudent a match."

About the same time, Julia married Mr. Seymour, the clergyman of Llanvair; a young man in every respect calculated to make her happy; but her health, not being constitutionally strong, soon declined, and eight months after the birth of a little girl, she fell a sacrifice to consumption. Poor Mr. Seymour, in following her to the grave, felt that it had enclosed his dearest earthly treasure; but while he deeply deplored the tender tie so early dissolved, he kissed the rod, and blessed the chastening hand, which, in transplanting his lovely flower, thus early matured, to a heavenly soil, had but shortened her pilgrimage, and wrenched from his heart, for purposes of infinite love, the idol which he perhaps had too fondly worshipped: he received the blow, therefore, as only given that his soul might be more closely united to his God.

The death-bed of Julia was that of a sincere Christian, over whom hung those bright hopes which faith had realised to her departing spirit. The conviction of her happiness now reconciled Mr. Seymour, in an earthly sense, to his severe loss: submission to the will of God did the rest, so that he returned from the grave depressed, but not subdued; resigned, but not enfeebled: his duties remained the same, and with the same pious zeal he steadily pursued them.

Lady Warton would gladly have taken charge of the infant Fanny, but to this Mr. Seymour could not consent; she was the only tie now left him to awaken a remaining hope of domestic happiness; her education would be an amusement, and her society relieve the solitude of his widowed home.

Lady Warton, also, had long severely felt the loss of her daughter, but other anxieties now occupied her mind, as Althea, who had married an officer, was going to India with her husband, and requested her

mother would join her at Lymington, to assist in the arrangement of her affairs, as she intended to leave her children in England. Lady Warton gladly obeyed the summons, as her spirits, being weakened by the many anxieties she had lately experienced, required a change of scene; she therefore left Wales with an intention of remaining some time in England, and to take upon herself the charge of Althea's children, should the offer meet the approbation of their parents.

Mr. Irwyn lived only eight years after his marriage, leaving his widow overwhelmed with grief, and two children to feel the untimely loss of a parent, whose life (humanly speaking) seemed so essentially necessary to their future welfare. Berwyns now wore a melancholy aspect; Mrs. Irwyn unsupported by religion, yielded wholly to indolence and depression, and scarcely feeling interested even in the education of her children, she gladly accepted Dr. Herbert's offer of receiving his little godson, and left the care of Ellen chiefly to

Johnson, who, fortunately was not only a faithful servant, but a most judicious and excellent guide.

Misfortune now seemed to follow this unhappy family. The bank, in which Mrs. Irwyn had placed a considerable part of her property, failed, and nothing was left from the wreck to ensure a provision for herself and children. The tidings of its failure were as sudden as unexpected; but she received them, if not with indifference, almost with apathy: she was "a wretched widow, and could never see another happy hour, she therefore now cared little what became of her." Such was her language, and certain poverty must have been her fate, had not her friends interested themselves in her behalf, and for the sake of her children taken the arrangement of her affairs into their own hands. They advised her of course to dispose of Berwyns immediately, being now wholly incompetent to meet its expenses. Thus, together with her own little income in right of her father, an independence was secured; though the most

frugal economy would still be necessary in her future establishment. Dr. Herbert, immediately onreceiving the sad intelligence of these unlooked-for changes, procured for his young charge the promise of a commission in the East India service, as being a profession least likely to incur expense: he therefore removed him to a military school near Portsmouth, where he was to remain until he was of an age to accept his cadetship. In consequence of this, Dr. Herbert urged Mrs. Irwyn to settle in Hampshire, and offered to find her a residence near him, suitable to her circumstances, where she might also have the advantage of being near her son. Lady Warton seconded the invitation; for though disheartened by the conduct of her young friend, yet ever alive to the sorrows of others, she was anxious to draw her away from the scene of so many recent trials, and if possible restore her once more to reason and to peace. Mrs. Irwyn therefore accepted Dr. Herbert's kind offers, and waiting only a summons, she seemed more reconciled to

the prospects before her. Poor Johnson wished to accompany her mistress, and promised to share without a regret every privation; but to this Mrs. Irwyn would not consent, as her finances were now unequal to support the expenses of such a servant without reducing her wages; she therefore insisted on leaving her, and advised her settling in her own little cottage, where Mrs. Irwyn promised the children should one day visit her.

Such was the early life of Mrs. Irwyn, and as we have already given an account of her leaving Berwyns, we need not repeat so sad a scene, but may at once follow her history and meet our little heroine on her arrival in Hampshire.

## CHAPTER II.

THE evening on which our travellers reached Lymington, was one calculated to throw a brightness on every prospect; it was in the latter part of September, when the surrounding woods, full of rich luxuriance, mellowed by the first tints of autumn, gave to nature its finest display of magnificence. The sun, just falling from the horizon, threw its last red beams upon the slated roof of the little cottage, where Dr. Herbert stood to receive and welcome its new tenants. Not a breeze was heard to disturb the evening song of the forest warblers, and all around was so serene, so tranquil, that it was calculated to impress the mind with a sense of its own peacefulness.

The cottage was named Hermitage, being built upon a spot where had once been discovered, buried under a moss bank, a Saxon staff, scallop shell, and a rude oaken

coffin—enough to celebrate it as the last remains of a Druid's temple; particularly as near it was a sort of cave or hermitage, formed by the huge trunks of worn out oak, bearing the appearance, or at least justifying a probability, of its having been the retreat of some of our wild forefathers; though more likely nature in its decay had alone formed this phenomenon, which thus, however, became the subject of many a traditional tale, said to be "founded on fact" from some "ancient Anglo-saxon legend." It was a neat, and prettily arranged cottage *ornée*, with white cement walls, and gothic windows, standing back from the public road, and concealed from the "rude gaze of passers by," by thick plantations of various shrubs. Mrs. Irwyn, as she alighted from the chaise, looked on the lovely scene which surrounded her, and almost reconciled by its first impression, she seemed to receive some compensation for the change over which she had so bitterly mourned; and giving her hand to Dr. Herbert, smiled through her tears, in silent acknowledgment

of the satisfaction which the appearance of her little abode afforded her. The sight of him indeed awakened the memory of happy days, which he had in part witnessed and shared—days now closed for ever, in the grave of her lamented and excellent husband: but the feeling was transient, for almost immediately recovering herself, she thanked Dr. Herbert for his kindness in having secured to her so pretty a retreat. "And I hope, my dear madam," replied the Doctor, "it will be one of comfort to you, and that you will here pass many happy years amongst us." Mrs. Irwyn sighed as she thought of Berwyns, and looking up reproachfully, said within herself; "Happy years indeed?—unfeeling thought! but there is no one who can understand such accumulated grief as mine." Ellen fortunately broke the silence which might otherwise long have followed, as running in, half abashed, she went up to Dr. Herbert, to ask for her "sweet brother." He took her on his knee, and replied "your sweet brother is quite well, and will join you on Saturday for a few

weeks; but pray how old is his sweet sister?" added he gaily. "I am just ten," replied Ellen, "and Herbert is fourteen."

"Well, I hope you will come to the Rectory to-morrow, and see my little Caroline who is just ten also, and will, I think, make a fine play-fellow for you; at least she is a great romp." The Doctor, then saying that Mrs. Herbert would call the next morning, took his leave, and left his friends to that rest, really needed after so many fatigues.

The next morning Ellen arose as soon as her eyes were open, and running down stairs, went to see the garden in which she was to have so much pleasure; when called to breakfast, she ran in, full of spirits, and exclaimed, "Oh mamma! you can't think what a sweet place this is; I like it a great deal better than Berwyns, only I wish that Fanny Seymour and dear Johnson were here, and my little Tiny, and then I should be quite, quite happy. I must write to Fanny soon, and tell her what a pretty cottage this is; though I don't think it is larger

than the Priory; is it, mamma? I liked Berwyns very much, but it was so very large, that it made my legs ache to run up and down so many stairs, and through such a great hall only to go from the breakfast room to the nursery; but now, I can be here, there, and everywhere in a moment; and from down stairs to my room, why, it is nothing more than a hop, skip, and a jump: and then you said you would give me a little garden, quite to myself. Oh! I know I shall be so happy!"

"Indeed, my dear Ellen," said Mrs. Irwyn, "I will give you any thing to keep you quiet, for your constant chattering really quite distracts me; so do come and choose a garden; then, after breakfast, pray dig, or do any thing you like, as long as you keep out of the way and don't teaze me: and then by-and-by Russell shall take you to Dr. Herbert's, where I have promised you shall dine with Caroline and Frederic."

"Oh! but I don't think I shall like to go there without you, mamma, so I shall stay at home and dig my garden."

"Nonsense, Ellen, do as I bid you, and don't be tiresome."

"Well, but I may go and dig first, for I shall have plenty of time, as now that Johnson is not with me, I shall never have any nasty lessons to learn." "I beg your pardon, Miss Ellen," replied her mother, "for as soon as your brother has left us, I shall begin teaching you myself."

Ellen sighed at this unexpected intelligence, but only said, "I am sure, mamma, teaching me will teaze you; for Johnson said I was very tiresome sometimes, when I did not choose to be a good girl." So saying, she ran off, followed by her mother, to the spot fixed upon as her favorite, and having received her portion, she was left to sweep, dig, or weed, as best suited her fancy.

Lady Warton was still residing at Colonel Stacy's house, nearly four miles from Lymington, where she intended remaining till the ensuing month, when the gentleman who had purchased it was to take possession; the distance from Mrs. Irwyn's being therefore beyond a walk, precluded the pro-

bability of their being so much together as when in Wales; and indeed the health of Lady Warton was so much impaired by recent anxiety, together with an accident which had entirely lamed her left side, that she was now wholly incapable of undergoing much bodily fatigue, and therefore seldom went from home, where she found enough to engage her mind in the charge of Althea's children. Anxious, however, to see her once dear *protegée*, she came immediately to greet her arrival; and though deeply disappointed in all her hopes where Adeline was concerned, she still met her with tenderness and heartfelt commiseration. She was received, though with kindness yet without any apparent gladness of heart. Lady Warton felt herself chilled, but not offended; the past indeed floated on her mind, and tears of many a dear remembrance trickled down her check; but soon forgetting her own in the sad privations of the widowed Adeline, she gently took her hand and reminded her of the "blessings still spared to her by that gracious God who

never forsakes His children, nor leaves the widow in her distress, though for purposes of mercy He may for a time smite them."

Mrs. Irwyn was perfectly silent—indeed sullen; she thought herself the most unfortunate and injured of women, and deemed all those who would not think so too, cruel and unfeeling: but, when she heard Lady Warton talk of *blessings*, she thought within herself, "all are indeed alike callous to my misfortunes, and age surely makes human nature turn heartless from its own miseries, since even Lady Warton has forgotten how to be tender to the stricken deer." Lady Warton read her mind, and was equally pained by her ungrateful indifference, as sorry for her pitiable situation. She saw that her heart, as Mr. Seymour had led her to fear, was indeed closed against that heavenly Spirit, whose presence is joy and peace, and whose voice can ever gladden the soul tempered to receive its consolations.

Discouraged, however, by the determined silence of Adeline, she forbore all further

remonstrance; convinced that it would be ineffectual, and trusting that heaven in its own good time, would warm so cold a soil to receive and nurture the seeds of a holier temper. She therefore entered on a general topic of conversation, and to Mrs. Irwyn's enquiries after Colonel and Mrs. Stacy, she replied that she had heard of their safe arrival in India, and that the three children were with her—the youngest a boy only seventeen months old. "Thus," said she, "does Providence ever follow me with undeserved mercies, and shield me from temptations; for were I left with a less anxious charge, I fear that my heart would sometimes indulge in lamenting its bereavements, and many an ungrateful thought might then follow the retrospection, or many an anxious wish dwell on the future, to embitter my present blessings; for" added she, with a resigned smile, "I may probably say that I have seen the last of *both* my children, for though my Althea's light heart anticipates our meeting again in three years, I confess I think that ten must elapse be-

fore her return, and I can scarcely expect those years will be added to mine." Mrs. Irwyn said she hoped "that many more than ten might still be numbered for her portion, as she could not yet talk of age."

"God's will be done," replied Lady Warton, "my own would but ill guide me had I no better pilot; but," added she, returning to her subject, "these little treasures, which Althea has left me, prove, I assure you, a great source of amusement and solace to me; and you know, I am not one of those who think age privileged to be idle: all here have their appointed duties, from childhood even to the grave; here then, we must work; and for *rest*—we may look to heaven, and hope to find that which "remaineth for the people of God."

Lady Warton then took her leave, and as she got into the carriage, Mrs. Irwyn could not but observe how much the few last years had changed her; for being lame, she was obliged to use a crutch whenever she went out, which gave her an appearance of infirmity: so that, although she was not

yet sixty, she bore the traces of much later years. Anxiety too had fixed its pallid hand upon her cheek, and human nature was not proof against its touch; though the smiles of resignation illumined her sweet countenance with a brightness, which time could never dim.

Dr. and Mrs. Herbert were now announced, and the ladies being introduced in due form to each other, the conversation turned upon the children of the respective parties, always an inexhaustible topic. Dr. Herbert requested that Ellen might return with them; Mrs Irwyn, therefore, sent for the young lady, who in about half an hour made her appearance, drest ready for her visit, though looking any thing but pleased by this interruption of her favorite pursuits.

Mrs. Herbert was a young and beautiful little woman, but had neither a mind to enjoy any thing beyond dress and admiration, nor a heart to love any thing but herself and her children. She was extremely insipid, but fond of company; and being rich was, of course, visited by every body; for

though no one esteemed her, yet she was a "harmless little creature," and always a pretty ornament for a drawing-room. She could not endure trouble of any kind, and thought herself quite overburdened in the care of her own dress, and of her children's complexions, who were allowed to do what they pleased, because it fatigued her to be always finding fault; so that they were permitted to run truant, so long as Miss Caroline was not in the sun without a veil to protect her pretty face, or Master Frederic, without his gloves to shield his white hands. Sometimes, indeed, Dr. Herbert would remonstrate with his wife, on the folly of allowing them always to run wild, as they were now old enough to begin better pursuits; but the delicate little lady would generally silence him by replying, that really she was so weak and nervous, that she was sure the anxiety of school-room discipline would throw her into a decline, and that the children were yet "*very* young." "Well, my love," was usually the reply, "then perhaps we had better think of getting a governess;"

but day after day, and month after month passed, yet no governess was thought of, and the young ones were still left to run wild, while the parents were sufficiently satisfied with the intention of doing better.

Dr. Herbert was a well-informed and polished man; in his clerical character the very opposite of Mr. Seymour, but good tempered, and of a kind heart. His sister had married Lord Selliston, through whose interest he had obtained the living of Durnford, a village near Lymington; he entered the Church with that view, but with a heart bent on a military life; his own will was, however, obliged to yield to that of his father, and the prospect of good preferment and a tolerably idle profession soon reconciled him to his destiny. He read well, and having a fine voice was admired in the pulpit—not as a good *clergyman*, but as an excellent *orator*. He preached for the rich; that is, his sermons were always in language of the highest eloquence. If a moral were to be drawn from a scene of death, it appeared as if our fear of it were

to be excited by the paraphernalia of the funeral; he would arrest the serious attention of his hearers by the alarming probability that soon "their blooming youth might be consigned to an early grave, and then the marble monument alone would remain to tell of former grandeur, and close the last sad tribute due to worth and loveliness;" or, if the joys of a resurrection were the theme set forth for our encouragement in "well-doing," he would preach of Heaven, as if it could be attained by our own fulfilment of a few moral duties; so that many a young fashionist would leave the church, impressed with the hope that they too might share the bliss they had heard so feelingly and flowingly described, as attached to the "song of angels which would wake the shrouded spirit to days of everlasting glory, in just reward of lives well spent on earth." Days of joy, ensured by what?—not by the suffering death of a Saviour, whose holy blood alone could wash away the guilt of fallen man, and redeem us from the forfeiture of our own wilful degeneracy;—and whose atone-

ment *only*, could save us from everlasting *death!* but simply by a "*consciousness* of never having wronged the fatherless or widow, robbed the wayfaring traveller, or stabbed the reputation of a fellow creature by bearing false witness against their actions." Thus, might an innocent life (that is a life free from robbery or murder,) ensure us the "reward of lives *well spent*," and days of "everlasting glory!"

So would Dr. Herbert preach—not for the praise of God, but for the praise of a fashionable congregation; while his poorer listeners would, in their astonishment of his language, call him a "*wonderful fine preacher*," although too humble to comprehend him; consequently they left the church, if profited at all, profited only by their prayers, but still in darkness as to the sense of the text which, as heading the sermon, they supposed would have been made clear to their simple minds; while he, satisfied that his clerical duties were over for the week, would leave the church, and gracefully bowing to the ladies in Lord L—'s carriage,

would as gracefully enter his own, and ride home to receive morning visitors and their encomiums on his eloquent discourse, pleased that his duty had been so well performed, and satisfied that the remainder of it rested in the hands of his young curate. His house was like himself, stylish and elegant; his hot-houses always produced the rarest fruits; his flower-beds, the earliest and most costly plants. His favorite boast was, that his children were the most beautiful, and his horses the finest, in the county: he kept hunters, and thought it no harm to use them six days in the week, if on the seventh he allowed them rest; so that he joined all the gay sportsmen of the neighbourhood, proud of being valued as a "good companion," and pleased with the policy of ensuring good connexions for his children.

Arrived at the Rectory, Ellen was introduced to the little Miss, who was to be her future play-fellow and friend. She came running into the drawing-room with her frock torn and covered with mud; and

without waiting for the ceremony of an introduction, she took Ellen roughly by the arm and exclaimed impatiently, "Oh! do come with me and see Frederic's fish; make haste, for if papa sees me, he will make a fine fuss." Unfortunately, however, for the young lady, her mother, who had been looking for her, came in just at the conclusion of this speech, and said, "Naughty girl! where have you been to make yourself in such a condition? did I not desire you to be drest ready to receive Miss Irwyn?—yet there you are just like a little beggar, without your bonnet too, although you know how much it vexes me to see you spoil your complexion in this way; but" added she, ringing the bell violently, "Davis shall have a good scolding for this."

"Why, mamma," replied Caroline, "I did dress; only Frederic called me to see his fish, and we have had such fun dragging the pond."

Davis came in, and having patiently received her "good scolding," only replied that she had drest Miss Herbert twice since

breakfast, and had told her twenty times not to go into the garden; but it was useless to speak, for she would always have her own way.

Ellen, who had expected that some further displeasure must ensue, was surprised on finding Caroline's disobedience remained unpunished; silently, however, obeying the summons to follow her up stairs, she was glad to leave such an altercation. She had never been in any other parsonage than that of St. Llenard's; but having always attached an idea of extreme neatness to a clergyman's residence, was surprised to find herself in one so magnificent. She had heard Mr. Seymour tell Fanny, when she was once wishing to have some mirrors like those in the drawing-room at Berwyns, that such ornaments were not fit for a country parson's house; yet in this, every room glittered with the brilliancy of its chandeliers.

The nursery was equally a new scene to her: toys of every description lay scattered on the floor; but a large baby-house was the

one which immediately attracted her attention, and running forward, she exclaimed "Oh! Caroline, may I look at this beautiful house?"

"Beautiful?" exclaimed she, "I am sure it is a nasty old thing, I am quite tired of it; but as soon as I am drest, I will take you in the garden and we can just run to see Frederic's fish; only don't tell mamma."

"Oh! then" said Ellen, "we had better stay in-doors and play here, for Mrs. Herbert would be angry again if we went out without her leave, and I don't like to see you scolded."

"I don't care what mamma says, she is always so cross, so indeed I shall go just where and when I please; besides, we can go down the back stairs and through the stable-yard, and then she need know nothing about it."

"But then that would be very sly," replied Ellen, who had never yet known what it was to have a thought of her little heart concealed, "and God, who knows

every thing, would be the more angry with us."

Caroline looked up perfectly astonished, and laughing heartily, exclaimed, "Why what a little methodist you must be, Ellen! however, do as you like, to the pond I shall go as soon as I am ready."

Davis now entered the room with another dress for her young lady, but Missy, already half vexed with Ellen, vented her rage in a violent stamp of the foot, declaring she would not put on that "hideous frock," but would have the one trimmed with lace. After some further altercation, Davis saw that all remonstrance was useless, and would only create a fit of crying without gaining any control over the child; she therefore went for the favorite frock of the day, and after ten thousand difficulties, Miss Caroline was at last ready to go down stairs.

Pacified, but half ashamed of her own conduct, and anxious to obtain an ascendancy over Ellen, who she saw was not to be frightened into compliance, Caroline went

up to her with a conciliating smile, and throwing her arm round her neck, said, "Don't look so grave, dearest Ellen, let us be friends, for I am sure that I shall love you very much; just come down and see Frederic, and then I will show you the rose-tree Herbert gave me when he was staying here."

Endearment to Ellen was always irresistible; and when she looked on the beautiful face of her play-fellow, which seemed so forcibly to ask her affection, her own unsuspecting heart opened to the appeal, and she replied, "I will do any thing you like, Caroline, but indeed I think we had better not go out, or at least, if you really wish it, do let me ask Mrs. Herbert's leave, and I will tell her it is I, who wish to go," half blushing at this first prevarication from the truth.

"Nonsense, Ellen! mamma is dressing, and would not now like to be disturbed; besides, it cannot signify, for I know that she would let us go," artfully replied Caroline, while dragging her unwilling companion out of

the room, she led her down the back stairs, and in a few moments they reached the pond.

Dr. Herbert, who was the only person in the world whom Caroline feared, on meeting her at dinner looked as if seriously offended, and fixing his eyes steadily on the countenance of his daughter, asked her how she dared go again to the pond, when her mother had so positively prohibited her doing so. This was followed by artful excuses on one side, and severe reprehension on the other; till the subject was at length closed by Dr. Herbert simply adding, that he was now resolved Frederic should go to Eton, and that he would procure a governess for Caroline, since she was no longer fit to be trusted by herself.

Thus passed the first day of Ellen's introduction at the Rectory: when she left it, Caroline gave her a little work-box, as a token of her wish for a further intimacy, and repeated the hope that they might soon be "great friends." All this did much in gaining Ellen's heart, which was susceptible to any thing like kindness; but she returned

home only half pleased with her day, and quite undecided whether she could love Caroline. To Mrs. Irwyn's enquiries how she had enjoyed her visit, she replied that she liked home best.

"But don't you like Caroline?"

"Yes, mamma, I like Caroline very much; at least she was very kind to me; but I believe she is spoilt, and tells so many stories, that I can't love her so well as Fanny Seymour."

"Because you know more of Fanny, but I dare say that you will soon like Caroline just as well."

Ellen shook her head, but not willing to say any thing more against Caroline, she changed the subject and said, "How glad I shall be mamma, when dear Herbert comes home, for I love him better than any one else; but as to Frederic Herbert!—I quite *hate* him."

"Why," said her mother, "what has poor Frederic done to offend you so grievously?"

"Done, mamma!—he is the most cruel boy I ever saw; he caught a water-rat, and oh! I cannot tell you how he tormented it—

and then said that Herbert was a coward because he never would join him in any of his cruelties; but I shall always hate him, and, I am sure brother must hate him too."

"You should never hate any one, Ellen; though it is indeed very wicked to be cruel: but how did you like the house, is it not very beautiful?"

"Oh! yes, it is so full of pretty things, that my eyes quite ache with looking at them all: but mamma, I thought a parson ought never to have so fine a house?—at least Mr. Seymour says so."

"Mr. Seymour is not rich, therefore he could not afford it; but Dr. Herbert has a very large fortune and consequently may live in style."

Ellen could not quite understand this conclusion of her mother, having heard Mr. Seymour tell Fanny, that a clergyman must avoid every superfluous expense, to be enabled more largely to contribute to the necessities of the infirm and poor. Ellen remembered all this, and, thought she, "That

is the reason why there are no ragged children about Llanvair, and if Dr. Herbert would only have a house like St. Llenard's, oh! how much money he would have to spare! quite enough to buy shoes and stockings for all those poor people we met to day." She then bade her mother good night, happy in her last thought, that in one more day Herbert would be with them.

Another day quickly passed; the happy Saturday arrived. Ellen got up early to sweep and weed her garden, that Herbert might see how industrious she had been; but scarcely had she completed her morning's task, when she heard herself called: down went her broom, wheelbarrow, and spade, at the well remembered voice, and in one moment she was with her brother; both seemed equally delighted to be once more together; but Ellen was almost wild with joy, and running in-doors, she exclaimed, half laughing, half crying, "Mamma? do come down stairs, here is our own dear Herbert come already." Breakfast was nearly over

before she could recover herself, question after question rapidly followed, and vainly did her mother attempt to silence her. Mrs. Irwyn expressed herself pleased with the improved appearance of her son, and with the good accounts his master had sent of his general conduct; but he had expected a warmer greeting, and his affectionate heart was damped by the disappointment: her praises, therefore, afforded him little pleasure, for he wanted a return of those lively feelings of joy, which he himself experienced. Chilled by her calm approbation, his young heart turned towards Ellen, doubly gratified by the enthusiasm of delight which her every word expressed. This he had scarcely expected, supposing that she might have forgotten him; it seemed to him, therefore, like a new pleasure, which perhaps from that hour strengthened the tie of fraternal affection which ever afterwards so powerfully united them.

Anxious to display the beauties of their new habitation to her brother, Ellen claimed all his attention; and taking him to see her

favorite garden, she exclaimed, "Look, Herbert—have I not been very industrious? for I assure you this was a perfect wilderness, and now you see I have made it look almost as neat as my garden at Berwyns; but you must cut my rose-trees, and show me how to mat this beautiful little pomegranate, for the winter. Don't you like this much better than Wales, brother?"

"Oh no, Ellen," replied Herbert gravely, "I shall never love any place so well as our last home."

"Why not? this is quite as pretty."

"It may be as pretty, but then dear Johnson is not here, and Fanny Seymour cannot come and play with us as she used to do; and every body seems so different here, that I am sure I shall feel like a fish out of water; and what signifies the place, Ellen, without the people?"

"To be sure, the people are very different, but then you know it is a different country, and as Mrs. Seymour used to say, 'when in Rome, we must expect to meet Romans'—so we must expect to meet gay

people in a gay place, and suit our fancies accordingly."

"Yes, but that is no argument, dear Ellen, to prove that we must love Rome best, or gay people either; nor shall I ever like this so well as Llanvair."

"I declare, brother, you ought to be crowned Prince of Wales—you are so true to your country: but what makes you look so grave?"

"Why, Ellen, I was thinking of poor papa, who was so fond of Berwyns, and of that happy time when he used to take me out shooting with him, though I was then but a little boy;—and how we used to scramble up the mountains together till my little legs quite ached, and then he would tell me not to mind it as I must learn to be a brave mountaineer, and to know every hill about Llanvair! Don't you remember, Ellen, how fond he was of every thing belonging to home? and had he lived we should not now be living so far from all that was dear to him; but when I return from India I will buy Berwyns

again, cost what it will," said the affectionate boy, tears filling his eyes.

Ellen's susceptible little heart caught the sadness of her brother's countenance, though she could not quite enter into such retrospections; but after a few minutes' silence she exclaimed, "Herbert, how Johnson would love to hear you speak of papa! —I have never thought of him so much as I ought, but I will think of him more, and not love this place better than Berwyns."

"I am glad that you do like the change, dear Ellen," replied Herbert, "since you are bound to live here; but I should be sorry to hear you say that you had forgotten Wales; and surely you must miss our kind Johnson, and Mr. Seymour, and sweet little Fanny, for there are none here half so good as they are."

"No," said Ellen with an arch expression, "truly may you say that, and as truly add, that there are none there half so hateful as Frederic Herbert: I wonder, brother, you can love him!"

"I never said that I did, Ellen, for I think him a very wicked boy; but he is so spoilt by his mother, that we must pity, more than hate him."

"Pity him!—I don't see why, for he is quite old enough to be a great deal better than he is: but do you like Dr. Herbert as well as Mr. Seymour?"

"What a question!—why, they are as different as the land in which they live. I like Dr. Herbert, because he has been so very kind to me that I should be ungrateful to dislike him, though I was heartily glad when I went to school; however, he is a very good man in his way, so I will say no more about him—but let us go in, for I have not seen half the house." So saying, both returned to their mother, and soon forgot all those sad thoughts which had cast so unusual a gravity on Ellen's countenance.

Such were the characteristics of these young minds. Framed alike in some respects, both might be said to possess the foundation on which a skilful architect might

have raised a temple of the purest excellence. Herbert possessed much of his father's brave and generous spirit, which, with an uncommon share of good sense, counteracted the dangers of a naturally romantic disposition. He was tenderly alive to every kindness, though he could too well discriminate between right and wrong ever to love where he could not esteem. Constitutionally susceptible, his affection was easily excited, but was as easily chilled. Where he loved he expected too much perfection, and was therefore frequently exposed to disappointment. He had not the quick abilities of his sister; he possessed more sound judgment and good sense than talents, though perseverance seldom failed to ensure him success. He had a peculiarly contemplative mind, which delighted itself in all the ideal visions formed by a lively imagination; but this too often led him to bask, with a romantic susceptibility, on hopes too bright to be realised; or to dwell, with a fond melancholy, on retrospections which he believed had

been too happy ever to be known again. He had always wished for the church as his favorite profession; but when told that he was destined for the army in consequence of his mother's inability to meet the expenses of a college education, he submitted patiently, though inwardly he bitterly lamented the disappointment. Thus he entered his military career, checked in his earliest wishes; but he was too brave to fear the dangers of a soldier's life, or to dislike its discipline, so that at Portsmouth he was equally beloved by masters and school-fellows, and whenever judgment or justice was required, to appease a dispute, or to decide an argument between his young companions, Herbert Irwyn was always consulted.

Had little Ellen too from this period fallen under the guidance of a judicious hand, the prophecy—that she would become "an angel upon earth," which Johnson's partial heart had often framed in her behalf, might, perhaps, have been almost fulfilled. Nature had modelled her mind

with many a fine outline; she could do any thing she chose to attempt, but was so extremely idle and volatile, that she had neither perseverance nor inclination to study any thing from choice: yet with a gentle hand she was tractable, affectionate, and obedient; affection could lead her with a silk, but violence could never drive her to any thing; reason could bend her to immediate compliance, but severity was sure to excite the most determined obstinacy. She saw her mother's indolence, and too often availed herself of the liberty it allowed her, so that having no one who could judiciously guide her, she soon became self-willed and disobedient; yet there was always so much sweetness of temper, that it was scarcely possible to be long angry with her, although no child was really more provoking.

A few days after Herbert's arrival, Mrs. Irwyn and her children were spending the day at the Rectory, and tea was scarcely over, when she was sent for in consequence of the arrival of gentlemen, who, Russell told her, were officers, but the name she

could not recollect. Mrs. Irwyn hastened home, and on seeing the strangers felt somewhat alarmed, as not recognizing either of them, she was at a loss to conjecture their errand. The elder took her hand respectfully and said, "Adeline, no wonder that time should have removed all traces of our former selves, but have you quite forgotten the name of your cousin Albert de Rancy?" Mrs. Irwyn turned pale as she too well remembered it as being associated with her days of childhood. "I could not indeed," said she, "have known you personally, but, believe me, if aught on earth could afford me another moment of happiness, it would be a visit from so dear and early a friend."

"I was certain," replied the Baron, "that I should meet from you such a reception, and let me now introduce to you another generation of our race, Louis, my only remaining child."

Being thus summoned, Louis came forward and gracefully received the introduction, and Mrs. Irwyn thought that she had never seen so handsome, so elegant a youth;

she bade her guests would make themselves at home and choose what refreshments would be most acceptable.

"We can scarcely call ourselves travellers," replied the Baron, "as we are only come from Portsmouth, therefore if you please we will wait your supper hour;" he then sat down by her side, and in answer to her enquiries as to what brought him to England, he replied, "Were I, my dear Adeline, to enter into all the particulars of my history since our last meeting, your patience would be tried to its utmost; I will therefore briefly give you its outline." He then simply related that he had settled with his father, immediately on leaving Paris, at Vevay; where, in right of his mother, they held some small possessions; and that during his residence there, he had married a sweet Swiss girl, and joined the Hanoverian allies, then commanded by her father, General de la Pierre, and that he was now also one of their Generals: that within a few years he had lost his father and mother, and was left a widower with only one son, and

then concluded by adding, that as Louis had chosen to follow a military career and was desirous of seeing England, he had succeeded in getting him a commission in the British army, and that to see him comfortably settled at Portsmouth, where his regiment was then stationed, was the purport of his errand to this country. He then made many enquiries respecting Mrs. Irwyn and her family, and when he had heard the sad events which had so early clouded her life, they separated for the night, mutually interested in the remembrances of former days.

General de Rancy was of a proud and imperious disposition, but there was an elegance about him that pleased, and a kindness of heart, which, when once known, covered much the asperity of his manners. His children, servants, and soldiers, had alike been taught to feel the utmost power of discipline; he exacted from them all the most implicit obedience, and where he was disobeyed, he was both tyrannical and unforgiving; but to such as valued his appro-

bation, served him faithfully, and could patiently submit to his austere control, he was not only liberal, but attached and indulgent.

Louis, who was just seventeen, was the pride and darling of his father's heart, although no one who saw them together would accuse him of possessing too much of parental tenderness; yet where his advancement was concerned, General de Rancy would have thought no sacrifice too great to ensure it; neither had he spared any expense in his education, he brought him up under the best tutors and the severest discipline.

Not more opposite is light to darkness, than was Louis to his father. He was mild, affectionate, and enthusiastic; and although the Baron had carefully endeavoured to subdue the excess of such feelings, they were still cherished; though, awed by his father, he dared not betray their existence. This restraint, however, threw over him a reserve which was often mistaken for pride, and compelling him to

conceal the warmest feelings of his heart, it often led him to seek that solitude in which he might enjoy communion with himself, and which therefore only fed the lamp his father so constantly endeavoured to extinguish. He felt grateful for the liberal education which he had received, but he was under too severe a control to love his father as fondly as he might otherwise have done, and would sometimes dwell on the remembrance of his mother, and think that had she lived he might have known a more affectionate parent.

According to an appointment made between them, Herbert joined his cousin early the ensuing morning, to make an excursion along the sea side; and it was not surprising that his young heart soon opened to the attractions of his companion, so that he returned from the ramble quite fascinated, while Louis was scarcely less pleased with the frank and artless manners of his young English cousin. Herbert was delighted at the thoughts of being often together at Portsmouth, and during breakfast he could

talk of little else than the pleasure which they were mutually to enjoy, and felt sure that he had at last found a friend in whom he might confide, and whose mind, though so far more cultivated, accorded so much with his own. After breakfast, the Baron proposed a visit to his old friend Lady Warton, and asked Mrs. Irwyn if she would trust herself in his curricle and accompany him. To this she gladly acceded, and taking Ellen with them the boys were left to amuse themselves as they pleased. Herbert proposed an excursion to Beaulieu Abbey, but the weather becoming too chilly for the water, they confined themselves to a ramble as far as Boldre, to see its church, which, as a specimen of early architecture, is curious and interesting. On their return, Herbert expatiated on the beauty of Hampshire, and told Louis that he would find much in it to please him, if his time in that neighbourhood would admit of his seeing all its Lions; "although," added he, "I ought not perhaps to praise the scenery of England to a Swiss, for we have here neither Alps nor

Juras to raise our imaginations to the sublime."

"Oh! Herbert," exclaimed Louis enthusiastically, as his native mountains were thus recalled to his remembrance, "how you would *enjoy* Switzerland! Here the spirit seems bound down to earth by the weight of your low atmosphere; but *there!*—the very air is food for mind, body, and soul! Oh! how you would delight in the beautiful magnificence of nature's proudest empire! Go to Mont Blanc, and you will find it there!"

"Gently, my dear cousin," replied Herbert, "and take care that you do not mistake that little white cloud for Mont Blanc, and this terra firma, for ethereal air; otherwise, I fear that you will wing a flight of fancy, and only learn the sober reality of the case by as rapid a descent into that horse-pond."

"Well Herbert, if you wish me to be true to my post as a rational being, talk not to me of Switzerland; its very name will act on my mind as the 'Ranz des Vaches,' has done on my countrymen before

me, and make me turn deserter!—but is not this the Hermitage? we have made but a short walk of our return."

"Because you have travelled upon the wings—not of love—but of fancy; and that is a rapid charioteer." So saying, both entered the house, and on going into the drawing-room, Louis was attracted by an instrument such as he had never seen before: he asked what it was, and Herbert replied, "It is a Welsh harp, but have you none amongst your mountaineers?—for surely the very soul of music should be with them."

"Music is not, I assure you," replied Louis, "a neglected muse with us—but who is the bard of your house?"

"Little Ellen, who does ample justice to the art, and if you have never seen any such performance, you will, I am sure, be amused by hers: the Welsh minstrelsy is a talent scarcely known in England, and now by no means prevalent in Wales; formerly there was not a hall in our land, that could not boast a minstrel, who used to perform extempore, sometimes for hours, generally on themes of national heroism, or some le-

gendary tale of love long past; now there are only a few who travel about the country, and manage to find bed and board by singing themselves into the good graces of the peasantry. The art in itself appears difficult, but to Ellen it is become easy by habit and early practice, though hers is not, of course, extempore performance."

"I should indeed like to hear her play," replied Louis, "for I can scarcely fancy a child capable of managing such a complication of strings."

"She shall sing to you this evening, and I assure you that you will find her no child in talents of any description. I only wish," added Herbert, sighing, "that she possessed half as much steadiness: she is truly a sweet affectionate girl, but that very affection leads her North, South, East, or West, just as its breath may chance to blow; she would sacrifice her life for those she loves, and consequently will, I fear, fall into many a snare, unless she find a better hand to guide her than Caroline Herbert, who seems just now to bear the palm of favor in all things with Ellen, and no one

can, I think, quite understand the management of a spirit like hers. However, I hope she will yet be preserved from the fatal influence of bad example. But I think we ought to prepare for dinner, otherwise, Louis, our muster will be called, and two found wanting."

The conversation, during the remainder of the afternoon, turned generally on Lady Warton, and the events of her trying life, till Herbert called Ellen and told her to tune her harp for performance.

"Then you will be harper, brother," said she; "for I am not in the humour for playing now, and besides cousin Louis is going to teach me to play chess."

"I thought, Ellen," replied Herbert, "that you could never refuse me any thing; yet to-day, not one of three requests has been complied with; so much for your promised consistency."

"*Three* requests!—then I am sure that I did not hear two out of the number."

"Come to me, and I will repeat them in your ear then," replied Herbert, beckoning her, and on receiving the communication

Ellen blushed, but only said, half laughing; "How could I, brother, when mamma told me to go out with her? To be sure I might have gone to you before breakfast, but then I was not in the humour for reading then."

"Remember, Ellen," replied her brother, "what Mr. Seymour used to tell us—that where duty was concerned, we ought not to consult our own fancies."

"Well then, dear Herbert," said Ellen, "I'll be more dutiful to-morrow morning; so don't preach any more, and then I will play or do any thing you like;" so saying she went, though rather unwillingly, to her harp, and looking very grave, she complained that the weather had put it so much out of tune, that she was sure it would take the whole evening to set it right; and besides, she did not know what to play. Herbert would not therefore further press the subject; but Louis, anxious to hear her performance, urged her to play, and promised to teach her some little Swiss airs, if she would but oblige him by one little song."

"But how will you teach me," said Ellen,

"for you cannot play yourself, and I do not know any notes?"

"Then how did you learn to play all your Welsh songs?" asked Louis.

"Old Llewin taught them to me when I was in Wales," replied Ellen, "but I can only play them from ear."

"Then I believe," said Louis, "I must leave teaching you till I come here again, and then I will bring my flute and you can learn of me as of old Llewin, by hearing the airs played to you."

"Oh! will you?" exclaimed Ellen with a delighted smile; "how I wish that you had it here now; I am so fond of the flute; and then I could learn your tunes, and we could play them together: oh! when will you come again, dear Louis? indeed you must come soon, for you have so many things to teach me."

"But I thought you did not like learning any thing."

"No, I don't like learning lessons at all, but music is a very different thing, and then I shall like you to teach me, because you are so very good natured; mamma says that

she will give me a piano some of these days; only I know that she very often says things that she does not mean—but do tell her that I ought to have one."

"Encourage me then," said Louis, "to make such a request, by proving to me that you deserve one."

Ellen arose perfectly restored to her usual cheerfulness, and sang several little songs in imitation of the Welsh minstrelsy, without any apparent difficulty. Nothing interested Louis so much as early talent, but when he saw it thus diplayed by one, whom he had hitherto considered as a mere baby, he could scarcely express his astonishment. At the conclusion of the performance he gave her a small gold medal which he had received for a German poem, saying, "Had I the laurels of Ida, a more worthy tribute than this should crown you a second Euterpe."

"Oh! thank you, Louis," said the artless child, delighted with the gift, but perfectly unconscious of the praise with which it was bestowed; "What a beautiful medal!—but who was Euterpe, was she your little sister who died?"

Louis could not help smiling at the simplicity of her reply, but seeing the playful satire expressed in the countenance of Herbert, he only shook his head, half ashamed of his own enthusiasm; while Herbert, laughing archly, said "Poor Louis! your laurels, you see, will not bear transplanting, and we cannot yet fly *quite* to the top of Mount Ida."

Ellen in the mean time had run to her mother with the medal, not waiting to hear the genealogy of Euterpe.

The entrance of supper now put an end to the subject, and sent Ellen to bed.

General de Rancy, thanking Mrs. Irwyn for her hospitality, told her his intention to depart with Louis, early the next morning. Vain were her solicitations, and the entreaties of Herbert, to induce his remaining with them one more day. Mrs. Irwyn therefore only added, that she hoped Louis would consider the Hermitage as his head quarters, whenever he could obtain a reprieve from duty.

"Louis would, I am sure," replied the Baron, "be always most happy to be an

inmate of this truly hospitable home; at the same time, I hope that he will never be tempted to follow his own inclinations, at the expense of higher duties, to which he must now devote his heart and time; pleasure must therefore give way, and he stand steady to the post of honor. He has been brought up, Mrs. Irwyn," continued he, sternly raising his voice, " under that control which pampers not the wild imaginations of a romantic mind, but claims the severest discipline of self-denial and forbearance: he knows me well, however, and knows too that a strict adherence to his duty can alone ensure him the continuance of my affection."

Louis indeed knew his father, and although accustomed to his ungentle admonitions, still he never heard them repeated without being awed by their force; but he only replied with an expression of deep feeling, " I trust, my father, that you will never be disgraced by a son whose pride has ever been your approbation and esteem; and when I lose the one, I may justly forfeit

all claim to the other." His countenance here brightened, as he looked forward to the career of honor which his noble mind felt so ambitious to pursue.

This last conversation had excited in each a seriousness which neither seemed capable of dispelling; the boys therefore took their leave for the night, Louis promising Mrs. Irwyn, that whenever duty set him free he would claim the indulgence of repeating his happy visit.

The next morning Herbert and Ellen rose to give the last greeting to their visitors, and as they followed them to the gate, Herbert took the hand of his cousin and said, "Louis, from this time let us be brothers."

"Be it so," replied Louis, "and may we faithfully preserve the tie; but we shall soon meet again"—then following his father to the carriage, he was soon out of sight.

Mrs. Irwyn seemed much depressed, and her children almost as grave, on entering the breakfast-room, which was now so scantily peopled. They could talk of nothing

but their cousins. "Oh! mamma," said Herbert, "I wish you could have seen more of Louis as he really is, how much I enjoyed being alone with him; to be sure he is a little too romantic, but then he is so good; before his father he is always so silent, that none can, I think, quite appreciate his mind, unless they hear his sentiments unchecked by the presence of that rigid old disciplinarian. Well, after all, I may be glad that I am to be a soldier, for perhaps Louis and I may be in the same regiment some of these days; I should like to go to Switzerland with him, although I laughed at him about it."

"I only hope then," replied Ellen, "that your regiment will not be headed by the Baron, otherwise you will soon be disciplined into better quarters. What a cross old savage he is! I am sure if I were Louis, I would never do any thing until he learnt to speak properly to me."

"He is indeed," replied Herbert, "a little too severe, but he is still a good parent, and Louis is not quite like you, my dear

Ellen, to be turned from the course of duty by the first rough breeze that happens to assail him."

"That may be true enough, brother, for I don't like your rough winds; so I shall always go where I may be best sheltered from them."

"A good christian, Ellen, would not say that; and perhaps rough winds would be better for you than your soft breezes, to which, if principle does not guard you, you may yet fall a sacrifice."

"Nonsense, Herbert," exclaimed Mrs. Irwyn, suddenly waking from her reverie, "for patience' sake, don't learn to be a methodist; one is really sickened by the very name of religion, there is now so much of it on the tongue of every body, yet I do not see that the world is the better for it."

Poor Herbert was effectually silenced by this unexpected interference of his mother; he made no reply, but sighed, as he could not but make the comparison between her and Mrs. Seymour, who had taught him that God should be in all our thoughts, and

that every christian should use the utmost influence of religious exhortations, to caution others against the neglect of the "one thing needful," that the weakest instrument might assist in the great workmanship of universal salvation.

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Ellen, who could bear any thing better than to see Herbert pained, followed him, and knowing the cause, by way of counteracting it, put her arm affectionately round his neck, and said, "dearest brother, I am quite in the humour for reading to day, so will you come and hear me finish the history of Joseph? you know we have only two more chapters: then you can help me to bring in my geraniums, for I am afraid the frost will spoil them."

Herbert understood her, for thus she always acted towards those who loved her;

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Russell, and every one in the house, were summoned to look at her magnificent pre-

sent; nor did her rhapsodies cease, till the novelty of the delight was over.

The time now approached when Herbert's return to school again clouded the happiness of Ellen: she sobbed bitterly at parting with him, and declared that she would not speak a word to any human being till he came back again, for she knew she could not enjoy one happy hour without him. At the moment of her sorrow, no doubt, she believed all these resolutions would duly come to pass, but how many minutes after her brother's departure they were preserved, we need not enquire. Poor Herbert felt as much, though he expressed less, at parting with her, while Mrs. Irwyn evinced precisely the same degree of regret on his leaving her, as she had done of pleasure when he first returned from Portsmouth.

## CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Irwyn, soon after Herbert's departure, began the "delightful task" of Ellen's education. Many weeks however had not elapsed, before she found the occupation heavy; it was therefore pursued without method or perseverance. She had neither temper to bear its trials, nor patience to subdue its difficulties; so that she would often submit to disobedience and idleness, rather than give herself the trouble of checking them. Ellen saw this, and became alike careless in her studies and indifferent to her mother's approbation, since she saw it depended more on the humour of the moment, than on her own exertions to do better: thus affection gradually decreased between them, and while Mrs. Irwyn thought her child the most tiresome, and her own fate the most cruel in the world, Ellen fancied her mother no longer loved

her, and therefore longed to find some object, on whom she could lean with that affection, which she believed was the greatest charm of life. While with Herbert his every word was a law to her; she had promised him never to be swayed by the example of Caroline Herbert, and at the time of promising, she resolved not to encourage an intimacy, exposing her to its dangers; but weak in resolution, and too strong in self confidence, she yielded to the charm of flattery, and the deceit, which once she so truly abhorred, at last found in her heart ten thousand excuses; contempt became pity, and, gratified by the professions of her friend, pity soon led to affection; so that although she confessed that Caroline was very artful, and had many faults, yet she felt confident of not herself falling under their influence, and therefore thought it no harm at least to love that *goodness of heart*, which, notwithstanding all inconsistency, still led Caroline to love her. Circumstances too threw them together, consequently she supposed all obligation of keeping her pro-

mise to Herbert cancelled; and consoled herself with a hope, that she might perhaps induce Caroline to love what was good and forsake evil; not dreaming of the possibility that Caroline might tempt *her* to evil, and lead her from the path of duty.

Mrs. Irwyn's health began to decline under the constant fretfulness of her disposition; and Dr. Herbert, anxious as far as possible to avert further misery from her, persuaded her to relinquish the charge of Ellen's studies, and to allow of her pursuing them with Caroline, whose governess might, he thought, for a trifling increase of salary, consent to receive Ellen for a few hours every morning. To this plan Mrs. Irwyn gladly acceded, so that the pursuits of these young people soon led to that mutual interest, which is generally followed by a closer union of affection. Caroline was delighted in having a sharer in all her pursuits, and seeing how easily she could acquire unbounded influence over her companion, failed not to secure what might prove so essentially useful to herself.

Months thus rolled on, and five years from this period found the minds of these young people modelled in some degree according to the tuition which each had received. Miss Graham was one of those, who studied the whims of the parent in the education of her pupils: she soon discovered the bias of each, and though she could not but feel the superiority of Ellen in talents and disposition, she dared not openly avow it, but was too politic to suffer her to outshine Caroline in those accomplishments which were thought essential for attraction. She knew that, to secure herself a comfortable situation, she must be more the guardian over Caroline's person and personal graces, than over her mind or heart, and as the young lady had learnt to estimate her beauty too highly now to neglect its preservation, or to require any longer the constant admonitions of her mother to "hold up her head," and study dress as the most necessary part of a "fashionable education," the change was attributed to Miss Graham's great attention and care, consequently she

was a great favorite, and sufficiently satisfied with herself in pleasing the parents. She never suffered any qualms of conscience to question the sin she was daily committing, in thus feeding the errors of a young mind for which she stood so awfully responsible.

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gence; novels and netting were the only resources she could find to supply those of the "healthy and happy," and to kill time, which hung so heavily over a life, she believed, bereft of every blessing. She knew, that is, she supposed, Ellen was profitably engaged in the hands of a governess; she therefore enquired no farther; she neither gave, nor encouraged that confidence, which so powerfully unites the heart of a child to its parent; so that Ellen seldom ventured to communicate the proceedings of her day, because her mother never seemed interested in them, and could "bear no worry in her present weak state."

Caroline was no sooner of an age to question why novels could be a prohibition to her, than she longed to taste the forbidden fruit; she therefore determined to get a novel. Seldom at a loss where ingenuity in deceit was required, she contrived to bribe a servant to procure one from the library, and induced Ellen to read it with her, as she "only just wanted to see what a novel was."

One transgression ever leads to more. Novels became the favorite recreation; and when Caroline could no longer obtain them safely from the library, she thought of another expedient, in making Ellen take them from her mother's room. To this she at first positively objected; but Caroline seldom failed in her end, and knowing that Mrs. Irwyn was then reading the Italian, she pleaded, "that it was the very book of all others she so much wished to read, and that if Ellen would but get it for her, it really should be the very last." Ellen resisted, saying, "that if discovered, her mother would never forgive her."

"Then you cannot love me," replied Caroline, "although you profess that you would never think of your own interests where mine are concerned; yet now you will not meet a trifling hazard to secure me hours of pleasure."

"Oh! Caroline," said Ellen, "indeed you do not know me; but since you doubt my affection, I will venture to prove it,

even at the risk of running myself into a fine scrape."

"If I really thought so," replied Caroline, "I would willingly give up my own enjoyments, but indeed, dearest Ellen, you are too fastidious, and how will you go through the world if always so afraid of a little scolding? However, oblige me this once, procure the book, and you shall share with me the pleasure of reading it; but should you be found out, all the blame shall rest solely on me, as I shall declare that you had no hand in getting it."

"Dear, generous girl," exclaimed Ellen, "I believe you would; but do not suppose that I could be so very mean; I will get the book, cost me what it will, only remember, it is to be the last we read."

The friends parted; Ellen returned to her mother's room, but dissatisfied with herself, and conscious of premeditated deceit, she entered with a clouded countenance, and a heart ill at ease; Mrs. Irwyn was, however, too much engaged with letters, which she had received from Wales,

to notice it, and giving her a packet from Fanny Seymour, she told her that Lady Warton had written to invite them all to pass the ensuing summer at Llanvair.

"And shall you go, Mamma?" said Ellen.

"I shall never return to Wales," replied Mrs. Irwyn, "but I can have no objection to your going with your brother and cousin Louis, if I can meet with a proper conveyance for you."

Ellen made no further reply, for she was not quite sure whether the visit would be one of much pleasure to her; she had heard Lady Warton ridiculed by the Herberts, as being methodistical and particular, and felt somewhat afraid to encounter all the common-place pursuits of so sober a family: she therefore silently left the room, to read Fanny's letter, which was written in that style of unaffected simplicity, which could leave no doubt of the sincerity, and unsophisticated principles of the writer.

Ellen sighed as she read the well described happiness attached to the duties of visiting the sick and relieving the poor,

and to the rational enjoyment of a home like St. Llenards: but, thought she, Fanny has no one to misunderstand *her* wish of doing right, therefore she can do her duty: well, after all, I think I shall like to go to Llanvair, and I am determined after this once, never again to yield to Caroline's nonsense.

On the same evening, while sitting with her mother, very intent on forming better resolutions for the future, Russell came in with a message from Caroline, who was in the parlour waiting to speak to her; she ran down, wondering what could occasion so late a visit.

Caroline shut the door as Ellen entered, and looking round, as if fearful of being overheard, said in a low voice, "do you know Frederic and Charles Maynard are come, and we have a delightful scheme for to-morrow morning, which you must share with us, for I can have no pleasure without you; so say not a word against it, as come you must."

"Where?" said Ellen.

"You know," replied Caroline, "that

there is a camp of gipsies at Amwell, about a mile on the other side of Darnford, and the boys are going to have their fortunes told; now that is the very thing, above all others, that I want to do, and by getting up very early I think we can contrive it famously, be home to breakfast as if nothing had happened, and neither your mother nor Miss Graham need know any thing of the matter."

"Oh! Caroline," exclaimed Ellen, "I dare not go, indeed I dare not, for you know mamma is very superstitious about gipsies, and would never forgive me if I went near them."

"That is the way you always throw cold water upon all our pleasures," said Caroline, peevishly, "and will never make the smallest sacrifice for my happiness, although I am constantly trying to promote yours, and even now, for your sake, I have, in defiance of all risk, run off in constant dread of seeing papa at my heels, and well I am rewarded for my pains."

"Caroline," replied Ellen, mournfully,

"I believe we should both be happier if we did not run so many risks for each other; I know, indeed, that you are always very kind to me, therefore do not say that I would make no sacrifices for you, when I love to give you pleasure; but as Frederic is with you, surely my going must be immaterial, and I know that mamma would be seriously offended if she knew it."

"Yes, but who is to tell her?" said Caroline; "there we have been planning every thing for your comfort, and I am sure it could do you no harm for once to walk two miles before breakfast, without reckoning every stone you pass, for your mother to moralise upon."

Ellen would have given the universe if at that moment she could have found resolution to resist: yet to be accused of ingratitude, by one whom she really loved, was to her worse than all. "Well, then," said she, "I will go this once, on condition that you do not ask me to have my fortune told."

Caroline, always rejoicing at the influence

which she possessed over Ellen, finally arranged that she would meet her at six the next morning, and affectionately kissing her, she departed.

Poor Ellen soon bade her mother good night, anxious to be relieved from the presence of one, against whom she was thus so wilfully transgressing. But when she was left to herself, the "still small voice" of conscience could not be so silenced, and impressed with the sense of her own guilt, she burst into an agony of tears.

Did she, in that hour of self abasement, raise a supplicating prayer for pardon to Him, in whose sight one word of heartfelt penitence is of so great a price? Did she seize that moment of contrition, and in pleading her own insufficiency to do well, implore a rescue from surrounding temptations? or, did she, in confessing the weakness of her resolutions, seek, with an earnest reliance on the mercy of her Heavenly Father, that strength, promised to all who ask it in the Redeemer's name, as a never failing help in every time of need?

Had she done so, ah! who can tell the blessings which might have followed the petitions! but she turned away from an offended God, and wilfully met, rather than resisted, the tide of guilt; thus prayer, which had lately become, what it ever must be, to every impenitent transgressor, a heavy task, rather than a pleasing duty, was now totally neglected, and for the first time, she refused that communion of daily prayer and praise, due to the Guardian of our lives and the Giver of so many mercies.

She was not yet, however, quite so hardened in sin, as to rest peacefully under its sting: wretched and restless, vainly did she court sleep, for in every little noise she heard her imagination formed ten thousand phantoms of impending danger; trembling and terrified, she longed to ask protection; yet how could she expect it from a God, whom she had disobeyed and forsaken? She could not pray; for sin was still premeditated, and how could both prevail? she therefore could only await, with a beating heart, the return of day-light, resolving that

nothing should again tempt her to meet the miseries of an overcharged conscience.

Day-light at length appeared, and dispelled alike her fears and resolutions of beginning a new day with a new life: but, alas! a life once abused is not so easily renewed, and again neglecting the only means by which it might have been purified, she hastily dressed herself, and joined Caroline, though too tired and spiritless to find any delight in the promised scheme of pleasure.

Arrived at Amwell, Caroline was the first to cross the gipsy's hand, who being sufficiently acquainted with the family at Darnford Rectory, to relate a few facts, she took care to follow them, by prophecies of future aggrandisement, and a good marriage, of course.

"Now, Ellen," said Frederic, "pray under what happy planet were you born?"

"I am not going to have my fortune told," replied Ellen. "I merely came here to please Caroline."

"Do not ask it, Frederic," said Caroline, "for Ellen is afraid lest a gipsy's spirit should

follow her into her mother's room, and tell tales of our truancy." "What! still under nursery government, Ellen?" said Frederic, "or is fortune telling one of the sins, over which Herbert has written—beware?"

"Neither the one nor the other," replied Ellen, timidly; "but I have no wish to see the future."

"Come, Lady," said the gipsy, encouraged by a look from Frederic, "cross my palm with silver, for many a bright day will pay it back. Lady, I can tell you who will soon win some pretty smiles, and give a heart well worth them."

"Or rather, my good woman, tell her where she may find a father confessor to give her absolution for the sin of following our wicked ways," said Frederic, sarcastically.

Ellen was not proof against ridicule, and finding that her resistance only exposed her to such pointed sarcasm, she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and at last yielding to importunity, she gave her hand to the gipsy.

On returning from Amwell, Caroline proposed taking the path along the shore; this she did, with the view of walking alone with Charles Maynard; so that poor Ellen, as an additional mortification, was left to the care of Frederic, whose society was at all times hateful to her; but never did she feel less capable of bearing it than under present circumstances; for as the example of dissipated associates had not improved him, he appeared more disagreeable and insolent than ever.

They had now lost sight of their companions, but turning an angle to take the nearest path to the Hermitage, Frederic suddenly exclaimed, "By George! there is Herbert Irwyn."

"Who?—my brother?" said Ellen, faintly, "Oh! I *hope* not;" but Frederic heeded not the mournful tone with which she spoke, while running forward as if to meet his best friend on earth, he declared, that "he was confoundedly glad to see him."

Herbert cooly returned his salutation; but looked surprised at seeing his sister so es-

corted, and confused; and as a painful suspicion crossed his mind, that all was not right, he said, "surely you are not alone, Ellen?"

At that moment she felt as if her heart would break, and falling on her brother's neck, she burst into tears.

Seeing her agitation, Herbert checked every suspicion against her; and believing it might arise, simply, from the surprise of so sudden a meeting, he prest her affectionately to his heart. But scarcely had she recovered some degree of composure, when Caroline came running down the hill, and full of spirits, greeted Herbert with a most courteous smile, adding on seeing Ellen's tearful face, "Now, Herbert, you must not betray us; we have been on a little secret expedition, and if you get Ellen into a scrape, I shall wage eternal war against you; so pray keep our counsel, and let silence be the watch-word."

"Ellen, I hope, has done nothing to incur such a dread of my betraying her, that

silence should be a charge of serious import," gravely replied Herbert, "but she will best explain your problem."

"The gipsy, however, has been true to her trust," said Frederic, turning to Ellen, "for behold your father confessor is already at hand; but come, Caroline; I vote more speed homeward, as morning air gives a keen appetite;" so saying, he sprang forward, and Caroline kissing her hand to Ellen, bade her be of good courage, and was with her companion soon out of sight.

Silently, but with far different feelings, did Herbert and Ellen return home. On entering, Ellen could only venture to say, that she would go and tell her mother of his return.

"My mother knows that I am here," said Herbert, retaining his sister's hand, "but being very unwell she wishes to remain undisturbed till she has had her breakfast; and I believe, she has been obliged to depute Russell, as tea maker, as you were not to be found: therefore, Ellen, you may perhaps spare me a few minutes, to

explain the meaning of what I have just seen and heard."

"Oh! Herbert," said Ellen in a tone of deep distress, "I am wretched, and can never again ask you to love me, for you do not know how very wicked I have been."

"Whatever may be your fault," replied Herbert, "I hope its evident misery may have awakened this feeling of remorse, and eventually be blest to you; speak to me then as your friend and brother; not as to one, severe to judge that, which perhaps may be more pitied than condemned; but oh! Ellen, is it possible that the depraved Frederic Herbert can have obtained an ascendancy over a heart, guileless as yours once was? I entreat you conceal nothing from me, as you value every blessing upon earth."

"No," said Ellen, "thank Heaven, that reproach may be spared; for never was any one so hateful to me as Frederic Herbert is, and ever will be; and yet I am not less artful, less sinful than he." Herbert felt relieved at this declaration of his sister, and

alarmed by her extreme paleness, he now only endeavoured to encourage her, by every assurance of interest and affection.

"Dear Herbert," said the distressed girl, "you are indeed always kind, always affectionate; and though I am sure you can scarcely forgive my fault, oh! do not, I entreat you, leave me quite to myself, or cease to love me, for truly you are my best, my dearest friend."

She then related to him all that had passed since the preceding morning; heightening her own, by veiling much of Caroline's fault.

Herbert heard her with mingled feelings of pain and surprise; but as he was sure on whom the blame principally rested, the generous confession of Ellen excited in his anxious heart a hope, that many a bright spark might still be smothered in her breast, which a better influence might yet kindle into the flame of virtue: painful as were the sufferings by which she now seemed really overcome, he could not but hail them as an earnest of future amendment:

he would not therefore check their force, but inwardly imploring the divine blessing upon them, he replied, "Ellen, I cannot indeed justify such wilful transgressions, but faithfully will I discharge the debt of affection, to which so sacred a tie as that of brother has bound me. I will not therefore attempt to palliate your error, in giving opiates which could only lull—not subdue, the poignancy of remorse; rather let me lead you once more to that throne of grace, where the tear of repentance is not only an acceptable, but a valued sacrifice. Yet think not, Ellen, that this is an easy duty to perform; contrition without amendment is, in the pure sight of God, little better than hypocrisy: much of self-control, and submission to a severe discipline, must follow the sense of error, or present self abasement will be ineffectual for future preservation. Depend upon it, that when you first neglected the duties of religion, circumstances were permitted to strengthen the fatal influence of sin: God never *leads* us into temptation, but if we refuse His

guidance, what earthly power can save us from its dangers? In ceasing from prayer, do we not presumptuously suppose ourselves competent to walk unassisted in the narrow path of virtue, and thus, literally deny the necessity of His providence? and in withholding praise, which is the only incense man can offer to God, do not we forfeit all claim to His daily protection, by ungratefully receiving that, which is so bountifully bestowed?—This, Ellen, is no vain theory; it is not the mere language of overwrought feeling: it is *truth*, and truth which *must* be obeyed, or wretchedness be our portion for ever."

"I know it well, and feel it, Herbert," said Ellen, in a tone of the deepest anguish; "but tell me, how can I now atone for the past, and indeed I will do any thing, every thing you can require."

"It is not *my* will, my dear Ellen," replied Herbert, "that you must consult. I can but pity, and warn you of the consequences which follow sin, but it is God to whom you must submit, and *His* laws must

direct the future. First, cast away that self confidence, which has hitherto so fatally deceived you, and led you to protract duties, because you believed that of yourself you could return to them, at any more convenient season. Go then to the Father of mercies, and seek that strength, with which He only can endue us; and then let the contrition you profess be followed by an immediate performance of active obedience. Go, and confess to your Heavenly Parent, and then to the mother against whom you have transgressed."

"But mamma knows nothing of it," said Ellen, "and indeed, I dare not tell her, for I know she would never forgive my having gone to the gipsy, in defiance of what I knew to be her strictest command; she would not speak to me as you do, dear brother, and I am sure I could not now bear any severity."

"Ellen," replied Herbert, with a look of heartfelt anxiety, "such is error, that it ever makes us cowards in meeting its humiliations, and thus how often is it con-

tinued in, because we are too proud, or too selfish, to yield to the conditions of acceptable repentance; but I repeat, that if you sincerely wish to offer an atonement, you must choose that most pleasing to the Almighty, and *obey* the conditions of His forgiveness, in fulfilling your duty to all those placed, by His will, in authority over you. Shrink not, therefore, my Ellen, from completing the task of reformation; continued concealment would be continued sin, and though your mother might, and probably will, severely reprimand your disobedience, yet patiently submit to the trial which you have brought upon yourself, and think of *One*, who is greater than any earthly power, from whom 'no secret can be hid.'—In regard to the gipsy, you have indeed erred tenfold; though, I trust, more thoughtless, than disregardful, of the misery, which you may have incurred for another, as well as for yourself: for, even supposing it were possible for human foresight to penetrate the mysteries of the Most High, impious is the hand that would dare

attempt to lift the veil, which He has seen fit, in infinite wisdom, and, mercy I may say, to throw over the future: but added to this, think of the guilt, into which, by encouragement, we lead those most unfortunate creatures, whose bread is thus earned by a life of falsehood and deceit; yet a far more lenient judgment may justly fall on them, whose crime is perhaps committed in comparative ignorance of its extent, than on those, who, under the privileges of a christian education, can thus provoke the punishments of Heaven."

Ellen listened with a feeling of almost enthusiastic reverence to the eloquence of truth, with which Herbert argued, and after a few minutes of serious reflection, she exclaimed, "Brother, before this day closes, I will, or at least I will *endeavour* to fulfil every condition, which you say is required. Oh! Herbert, if you were always with me, I think I could never do wrong."

"Do not say that, Ellen," replied her brother, "for it is not I who can change

your heart, or sanctify your thoughts; some allowance may indeed be made for you, under the situation in which you have been placed; young and open as you are, to the specious endearments of a plausible companion: but no one knows better than yourself, how to discriminate between good and evil; no one can be more gifted with talents, good sense, and judgment; and many were the advantages you received in your childhood, from the pious principles of our dear Mr. Seymour: these you have abused, therefore you cannot too soon, or too earnestly, endeavour to retrieve them, since youth can now scarcely plead again in your behalf. You are blest with powers to stand alone, lean not then on me, dear Ellen: but even against this temptation has not God given a remedy?—by removing me from you, lest by clinging too fondly to a brother, your obedience to His laws would be subservient to the wishes of the creature, rather than to the will of the Creator."

Ellen had now almost caught the holy temper of her brother, and felt as if she

could perform every duty without difficulty; ardent were her resolutions; and lighter in heart than she had been for some time past, she followed Herbert into the breakfast-room, and cheerfully partook of a meal, which but an hour ago she had declared she would not touch.

Encouraged by Herbert, and strengthened by his admonitions, she retired soon after breakfast, to prepare herself for the dreaded interview with her mother. Anxious to convince Herbert that she was not too weak to follow resolutions seriously made, she endeavoured to summon her utmost fortitude, that she might appear for once firm in the cause of duty. The struggle, however, was not unobserved by Herbert, though he forebore any remarks which might damp her exertions. She had desired Russell to let her know when her mother was dressed, but on receiving the summons, her boasted courage rather gave way. Many times did she reach her mother's door, and as often did she recede; but at last, ashamed of her irresolution, she

entered with a beating heart, trembling in every nerve, saying, "Well, indeed, may Herbert call me weak."

Mrs. Irwyn immediately began complaining of her want of filial attentions; and though Ellen could not but feel the justice of the reproach, yet it was not calculated to facilitate the task of confession. Mrs. Irwyn, roused by the unusual silence of Ellen, who seldom patiently received any thing like reprimand, looked up, and always anxiously alive to any apprehension of sickness, where her children were concerned, she exclaimed, in a tone of alarm, "Ellen, my child, for patience' sake, why are you so deadly pale?"—Ellen threw herself down, and hiding her face in her mother's lap, she sobbed bitterly, and could only reply, "Because, mamma, I have been so very wicked; but pray forgive me, and indeed I will tell you all."

Mrs. Irwyn, satisfied that illness was not the cause of Ellen's altered countenance, and vexed at the unnecessary alarm it had created, felt little disposed to receive gra-

ciously any concession on the part of her child; she therefore only said, in repulsing her, "Pray what have you been doing now? you are always running into mischief, and will, I know, be my death, before you have done." To such a temper as poor Ellen's this was a severe trial; but she thought of Herbert, and sincerely desirous of atoning for her conduct, she patiently bore all discouragements, and told her mother every thing respecting the clandestine excursion of the morning.

Mrs. Irwyn listened silently till the gipsy was mentioned, when, without the least consideration for Ellen's candid and generous avowal of her fault, she expressed, in terms of the utmost violence, her surprise at so daring an act of disobedience. Ellen implored forgiveness in the most touching language of penitence, and had her mother then judiciously granted a pardon, and seized that moment for gentle remonstrance, it might, in a heart like Ellen's, have ensured the fullest return of gratitude and reformation: but, when told that "her

contrition was nothing more than a display of feeling, and an affectation of principle, merely because Herbert was at home to admire and believe it;—that she was the misery of her mother's life, the source of all her ill health, and that she was constantly irritating her weakened spirits by scenes only calculated to increase her disorder, yet all to no purpose;"—she felt how unjustly and cruelly was the reprimand administered, and having at length succeeded in obtaining, by her importunity and promises of future amendment, a very frigid sort of reconciliation, the poor girl left the room, to seek the encouraging kindness of her dear Herbert. She related to him all that had passed, adding, that never would she again expose herself to the mortifications of such unkind repulses, from a mother who seemed so little alive to parental tenderness.

"Indeed, Ellen," replied Herbert, "I hope that you will never expose yourself again to the necessity of meeting such mortifications, as must ever follow disobedience; but you have still much to con-

quer, much of self-will to subdue, before that peace of mind can be yours, which ever attends duties *well* performed. When you consider the nature of your offence, your situation as daughter, and the weak health of your mother, say, Ellen, who may with the greater justice complain of mortifications, the disappointed parent, whose comfort rested on her child, or the daughter, who has denied it to her, by a careless inattention to her wishes? Your mother may have been injudiciously severe, but the aggravation was great, and given by you; surely, my dear Ellen, you ought to receive, with feelings of humiliation—not *anger*—its consequent reproaches." Ellen blushed, and as she confessed the justice of her brother's arguments, felt how weak and self-willed were all her best resolutions; humbled therefore in herself, never was she more completely subdued to obedience and submission.

Russell at that moment brought a note from Caroline, which required an immediate answer; it was as follows :—

"Do, my dearest Ellen, send me by return of the bearer, the two first vols. of 'The Italian,' which you promised me, as papa and mamma dine out to-day, and for a treat, Miss Graham is to go with them: therefore, as I shall be left alone, I do not see why I am not to have a treat as well as my governess; so pray take compassion, for only think how moped I shall be, without the charms of an Italian.

In great haste,

ever Yours,

CAROLINE."

Ellen, somewhat confused, gave it to Herbert, and said, "What can I do, brother? if I break my promise, I know that Caroline will think me every thing unkind and dishonorable, and feel really pained, as well as displeased, by my refusing so trifling a sacrifice, and as she promised it would be the last—"

"Can the sacrifice of truth, Ellen," interrupted Herbert, "be called *trifling?*—a pro-

mise which is in itself sinful, can never be binding. There is but one strait road to happiness, and if you would seek it, turn not to the right, or to the left, lest you miss your aim, and find only misery. Answer Caroline by simply stating your inability to procure the book, without disobeying and displeasing your mother; therefore, you must henceforth decline making any further promises respecting it. This will sufficiently express your own intention of discontinuing so unprofitable an amusement, and need not offend by appearing to dictate in her pursuits."

This was accordingly done, because Herbert was at hand to urge it; though Ellen inwardly thought that she could more fearlessly have stood the risk of punishment once more, than the result of her refusal to one of Caroline's unreasonable temper. However, the day closed with far happier feelings than she had lately experienced; she could not but compare them with those of the preceding night, and having fervently implored the blessing of the Almighty upon

her endeavours to do her duty, she slept in peace, secure in the protection of Him, to whom she had that day in sincere penitence returned.

Herbert passed the evening alone with his mother. Ellen was their principal subject of discussion; and he could not but see how injudiciously she was managed; but although he deeply regretted that so fine a disposition was not under better control, yet he never ventured to express such sentiments before her. In consequence of Lady Warton's invitation, he had returned home with the hope of arranging some plan for its acceptance, being desirous of once more seeing his native place, and those early friends connected with it, previously to his going to India—perhaps for ever. All attempt however was ineffectual in persuading Mrs. Irwyn to join him in the visit, but he now felt doubly anxious to take Ellen from the influence of Caroline Herbert, that, if possible, absence might break the spell that bound her to so dangerous a friendship. He therefore advised his mother

to consent to her going to Wales for the summer, after which he thought a governess might be perfectly unnecessary, and then all necessity of her being so much at the Rectory would be obviated. Thus it was decided, that if he could find any female companion under whose protection she might undertake so long a journey, and Louis, who was included in the invitation could obtain leave of absence, it should be accepted for the ensuing month; and for the intermediate time, Herbert determined to find a plea for detaining Ellen as much as possible from the society of her favorite. Mrs. Irwyn faintly recollected having heard something of Mrs. Warton's intention of going to Llanvair, but as she very seldom troubled herself in the ordinary concerns of others, she remembered nothing beyond the mere probability of such an event: she added, however, that as Mrs. Warton was a rank methodist, she should prefer any other person, if only a servant, to take charge of her daughter. Not so thought Herbert, who therefore resolved to ride over, the next

morning, to Ashfield, and lose no time in gaining every information from the lady herself, knowing her character sufficiently to feel assured that she would sacrifice much of her own convenience where others were concerned, and therefore made no doubt that she would kindly take his sister under her protection.

With this prospect, he retired for the night, deeply impressed with the incidents of the day, and full of anxious forebodings respecting the welfare of Ellen, which seemed so strangely interwoven with good and evil.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Herbert breakfasted early, to prepare for his embassy to Ashfield, a ride of seven miles, and told his mother that as he should be so far on the road, he thought he had better proceed five miles further, and cancel a debt of politeness, long since due to Lady Catherine Foster, and call at Laylands; she must not, therefore, be surprised should he not return till late in the evening. Ellen, on hearing this, reminded Mrs. Irwyn of a promise she had made of inviting Lyna Stanhope to pass a few days with her, and now urged permission to ask it for the ensuing week; this being granted, Herbert proposed that as the morning was so fine, he should borrow Dr. Herbert's curricle, take Ellen with him, and bring back Lyna, should such a proposition meet the consent of

Lady Catherine. This being duly arranged, Ellen accompanied her brother, in high spirits at the thoughts of thus having another holiday and a further reprieve from meeting her incensed friend.

Herbert, being personally a stranger to Mrs. Warton, as he approached her little cottage, felt somewhat awkward in introducing himself on an errand which might appear impertinent and intrusive. On entering, however, all feelings of restraint soon yielded to those of ease and assurance, as Mrs. Warton, who knew him well by name and character, received him, not as a stranger, but with the most friendly smile of cordiality and kindness.

She was, as Mrs. Irwyn had called her, a "*rank Methodist*," since she was not even a member of our church, but belonged to that sect of christians denominated "Wesleyan dissenters." This she had become some years ago, in the first instance more from necessity than choice, having been driven from her parish church, dis-

gusted by the lax principles preached by a lukewarm, careless, fox-hunting clergyman. She was consequently led to the little chapel of Mr. Elliston, from whose simple and excellent ministry she soon derived comfort as well as benefit; and feeling assured that the precepts of Wesley there preached, were perfectly consistent with those of our Saviour, and their service differing from that of our church only in form, she entered the society and became one of its supporters. Yet she was often heard to express a preference for our beautiful liturgy, and when at Llanvair, she found a more substantial pleasure in hearing Mr. Seymour, and in joining heart and soul in the worship of his church.

She was now arrived at the evening of life; with an uncommonly sweet voice; mild, yet dignified in manners; she possessed much to interest in her first appearance, and her countenance was so expressive of the benevolence of her heart, that misfortune fearlessly appealed for her sup-

port, and timid merit delighted in seeking her encouragement and esteem. Every thing around her was neatness itself; and but for the black color of her dress it might have been taken for that of a quaker.

Ellen, who took little share in the conversation, sat silently observant of all that was before her; such had been her idea of a methodist, that she was surprised to see the one now before her, so cheerful, so active, and the little room elegantly, though simply, ornamented with fresh gathered flowers, the earliest of the spring. On the table, indeed, was a Bible, several missionary and Jewish reports, a basket full of work, evidently clothes for the poor, and some papers on which were written, "School accounts;" yet Mrs. Warton spoke both feelingly and sensibly, without quoting scripture to enforce her language, or tears of melancholy to excite an impression of seriousness.

Ellen had heard that from affluence Mrs. Warton was reduced to a very limited income; that she had lost her husband, and

within five years had buried a son and two daughters; yet, of these she spoke in language of perfect submission to the will of God; and though so far from rich, her widow's mite judiciously bestowed relieved many a poor sufferer.

On hearing the purport of Herbert's visit, she assured him that she would feel much pleasure in having such companions for her fellow travellers, but in regard to the time, she regretted the necessity of leaving it very undecided; "for," said she, "I have undertaken a little cause in behalf of a young orphan, who appears to me to be suffering under some injustice, and while I have the least hope of being useful to her under such circumstances, duty of course imperatively demands my remaining here; I have therefore been induced to protract my journey another fortnight or three weeks, otherwise I intended going in this present month, but I think I may promise being at liberty, at the very latest period, about the end of May."

She then told Herbert, in answer to his enquiries respecting her visit to Llanvair, that she should merely be a passing visitor at Lady Warton's for a fortnight, as she was going northward to see a niece, who, having just lost her husband and being in very ill health, stood in need of her assistance and society.

She pressed her young guests to share with her a homely dinner, but this being declined luncheon was substituted. Ellen looked up surprised as Mrs. Warton said a grace previously to her partaking of the little meal before them; it was, however, cheerfully enjoyed, and Ellen went away delighted with Mrs. Warton, whom she thought not after all so very puritanical, excepting, indeed, "saying grace before luncheon."

During her ride to Laylands, she spoke of little but the pleasure with which she anticipated her excursion, and declared she would never again laugh at a methodist, if all were as happy and good as that "sweet woman" Mrs. Warton.

They were received very differently, though with much politeness, by Lady Catherine Foster, who, with perhaps an equal share of dignity, possessed less of that suavity and mildness, which ever make us feel at ease even with those of exalted rank.

Ellen in a few minutes mentioned her mother's request, that Miss Stanhope might be allowed to return with them for a few days, should it meet with the approbation of her Ladyship;—but was only answered in a constrained and evidently agitated tone, that Miss Stanhope had left her.

"Is she gone to the Island," enquired Ellen, "and will her stay from Laylands be long?"

"She does not again return to it," replied Lady Catherine, endeavouring to suppress something of displeasure; and raising herself with a haughtiness of manner, added, "the air of Laylands is, I believe, considered as too bleak for the tender constitution of Miss Stanhope, but she is now at Ashfield, I suppose, where you may probably hear

her pleasure respecting your mother's invitation."

Ellen, silenced by a look from Herbert, forbore all further enquiries, and seldom best pleased when disappointed in any anticipated pleasure, she sat, during the remainder of her visit, silently impatient to be gone. Little of conversation passed on either side, and seeing that all was not right, Herbert, after a few common place remarks, took his leave.

Ellen was now all impatience to hear why Lyna was thus removed from Laylands, and always interested in every cause that seemed unfortunate, she was miserable under her present forebodings. "Yet, surely," said she, "misfortune can scarcely have reached the envied, the happy, Lyna Stanhope."

"In this life," replied Herbert, "all are subject to vicissitudes, but I know of none more exposed to them than an envied favorite. I will not, therefore, be hasty to condemn in the present instance, but something evidently has occurred of no trifling

nature, and I can scarcely conceive any circumstance can have deprived Lyna of such a home, where for years she has been almost the idol of her generous benefactress, without much of serious fault being centered in herself."

"Oh! Herbert," suddenly exclaimed Ellen, "I will answer for it, that Lyna Stanhope is the very orphan in whose cause that sweet angel of a woman is engaged! Do, brother, return home through Ashfield, and take her with us, for you know Lady Catherine said she was there, and, poor girl, she must be very unhappy, she was so fond of Laylands."

To this plan Herbert objected, as, being rather more considerate than his young sister, he wisely suggested the improbability of Lyna's accepting such an invitation under the present circumstances; and to propose it might appear both indelicate and unfeeling; but he promised Ellen to lose no time in making enquiries respecting her from Mrs. Warton.

Mrs. Irwyn, on hearing the result of the

day, expressed more interest than was usual to her in the affairs of others; but she positively refused to invite Lyna, which she said could not now be done without very justly offending Lady Catherine, and acting completely in defiance of all propriety; "besides," added she, "no doubt Miss Stanhope must be to blame, and therefore no encouragement ought to be given her."

"Poor Lyna," said Ellen, "that is the way of the world, the unfortunate are soon deserted, and easily condemned; but if Mrs. Warton be her friend, she need no better advocate."

Mrs. Irwyn then told them, that she had made an engagement to pass the evening at the Rectory. Ellen was not much disposed to accept such an invitation, knowing the displeasure she had incurred from Caroline. Nothing indeed could exceed the violence of that young lady's temper on first seeing Ellen; but after much reproach on one side, and many tears on the other, a reconciliation was at length effected, and they parted mutually forgiven.

The ensuing morning, Herbert rode over to Ashfield and found Mrs. Warton prepared for going out, as if waiting some appointment: he apologized for his intrusion at such a moment, but when she heard the object of his visit, she told him she was only waiting the arrival of a post-chaise to go to Laylands, that she might at once learn the real cause of Lyna's removal; "But," added she, "if you will try me to-day as a fellow traveller, I shall not be sorry to have a companion in so formidable an errand, and during our ride I will give you all the information I have been able to gather respecting Miss Stanhope, for whom I cannot but feel interested, not only as having known her poor mother, but I confess it appears to me that much of mistake has been in this affair, and perhaps we may find that she is less to blame than is represented."

Herbert willingly accepted the challenge, and when seated in the carriage, he repeated his curiosity to hear something of Miss Stanhope's history; "For," said he, "I

know very little of her, having only occasionally seen her at Laylands, where she appeared almost idolized: I thought her a very unassuming girl, and always admired the carelessness with which she received the flattery to which she was constantly exposed by those who were desirous of pleasing Lady Catherine; but I confess that I should suppose no one but herself could have prejudiced Lady Catherine against her—what then is the cause assigned for her removal?"

"One that appears to me perfectly inconsistent with what I know of both parties," replied Mrs. Warton. "Lyna is accused of having complained of her situation at Laylands, and consequently is thought a most ungrateful girl: she has not lately appeared in her usual spirits, and Lady Catherine, believing the reports against her corroborated by such circumstances, refuses to receive her again under her roof; but I think I can trace the source of all this mischief, and therefore feel myself called upon to advocate an orphan's cause."

"Is she a relation of Lady Catherine's, that she was adopted by her?" asked Herbert.

"None whatever;" replied Mrs. Warton, "she, poor girl! never knew her mother, who died soon after her birth, and seven years after she was left an orphan, to the care of Mr. Morton, an intimate friend of Mr. Stanhope; but upon his quitting England under adverse circumstances, Lady Catherine, pleased with the artless simplicity of the child, and commiserating her melancholy situation, generously offered to adopt her, promising that while she lived she would be a mother to her: and truly has she fulfilled the utmost of her promises, for Lyna has shared, as her own child, her home, her fortune, and her confidence, until this moment when all seems lost to her at once by the magic of some mystery, which time may prove to rest with a hand at present concealed."

"But who could have been cruel enough to raise any report of such serious consequences, without some foundation of truth

to warrant it?" said Herbert. "Envy, my dear Sir," replied Mrs. Warton, "can build a huge fabric of evil on a very narrow foundation, and ever chooses the sweetest cup of happiness in which to throw its poison. Lyna, I believe, has for some time been its object: too generous to be suspicious and too disinterested to guard against appearances, she has probably been imprudent; but as I have lived secluded from the society in which she has been placed, I have really had no opportunity of personally judging her general conduct; I therefore wish to act impartially, and form my opinion from circumstances as they stand with both parties, that truth, not prejudice, may decide my sentence for or against the delinquent, and reason, not report, actuate my feelings towards her."

Laylands was now in sight, which prevented further conversation, and, followed by Herbert, Mrs. Warton entered with that dignified composure which ever accompanies true greatness of mind, employed on an errand of justice or benevolence.

But we will now enter into a few particulars of the circumstances, which thus claimed the interest of Mrs. Warton; and, leaving her, will give a brief outline of the history of Lady Catherine Foster and her orphan protegée.

Lady Catherine was an elderly woman, but still bore traces of much genuine elegance both of person and manners. She was the only daughter of the late Lord Denby, and inheriting from him an uncommon share of family pride, assumed the appearance of a haughtiness that often made her an object of fear rather than of love, till the real goodness of her disposition could be more thoroughly understood: she possessed a powerful and highly cultivated mind, and a heart capable of strong affection, though it was not easily excited; yet, where she loved, it was with enthusiasm, and consequently expecting a devoted return, she was the more susceptible to disappointment. She prided herself on being a strict adherent of the "high church," and no one more punctually, or with more de-

votion, attended to all its ordinances; but she deemed it quite unpardonable in any one of her own doctrine, to be seen engaged, hand in hand with dissenting societies; and though she would willingly give ten or twenty pounds to our parent institution for promoting christian knowledge, she would never bestow one on foreign missionaries, because she said "they only encouraged methodists and seceders:" but still she was truly benevolent, and notwithstanding these few inconsistencies of character, she was justly beloved in her own circle, and universally respected by all who knew her.

Her affection and solicitude had hitherto centered in Miss Stanhope, from the hour in which she had formed the scheme of educating and adopting her as her own child, and she had rested with a fond delight on a vision too romantic to be realized, that Lyna would grow up devoted singly to her benefactress, without a wish, thought, or hope, beyond the interests of Laylands.

Being the only surviving descendant of

Lord Denby, she possessed a considerable estate, and having no other relative than a nephew settled in India, whose profligate habits and want of respect towards herself had so completely weaned him from her affection, that she often said he need expect no future consideration from her, she had therefore many to court her favor, under the hope of being eventually benefited by their attentions. Amongst these, was a Mrs. Grentham, a young widow, who from a long and early intimacy seemed to claim a preference; but as Lady Catherine had always declared her independance respecting the disposal of her property, it was never known to whom it would finally devolve.

Mrs. Grentham therefore, who was a most selfish, artful, and politic woman, heard, with many a sore foreboding, of the growing and devoted fondness with which Lyna was regarded by Lady Catherine, and alarmed by the frequent insinuations of her friend Miss Herald, (who looked forward to being one day her companion) "that Lyna had twined herself (she would

answer for it) by many a well executed artifice round the heart of Lady Catherine," she began to see the probability of all this; and on hearing it said that Miss Stanhope would no doubt inherit a considerable fortune from her benefactress, she determined to watch every opportunity of discovering the truth, and if Lyna had dared (which Miss Herald assured her was the case) to spread such a report, she must be wholly undeserving of further encouragement. Mrs. Grentham, who had looked forward during the last ten years to Lady Catherine's decease, which every year she thought must hasten, impatiently awaited it as an event which would place her in that sphere of adulation and envy she had been so long desirous of attaining, and consequently could ill bear the suspicion which was now awakened, that another might step between herself and her ambition. She therefore determined to propose a visit to Laylands, and offer to spend a few weeks there the ensuing Christmas, on the plea that unavoidable engagements might otherwise deprive

her of the pleasure of seeing Lady Catherine for some months: thus she might be enabled to judge more satisfactorily of Lyna's situation, without creating the suspicions, which enquiries might do. This was acceded to, and accordingly she passed the Christmas month at Laylands, where she found Lyna consistently affectionate to her benefactress, and unpretending in herself: she could therefore find nothing in her conduct to justify any suspicion against her. Lyna had indeed too long been accustomed to the fond devotions of Lady Catherine, to experience the slightest deviation from it without pain, consequently she was jealously alive to every look and word, yet the most fastidious observer could never accuse her of any thing like servility or flattery. She looked up to her benefactress as if all her happiness centered in her kindness, but never having been led to expect the continuance of the comforts by which she was surrounded, beyond the lifetime of Lady Catherine, she often dwelt on the melancholy anticipation of an event, which she

believed would at once deprive her of so beloved a friend, home, and all its blessings. This had probably secured her mind from the dangers to which her situation exposed her, so that humble in herself she commanded at least the respect even of those to whom she was an object of envy. All this was not lost upon Lady Catherine, who, in proportion to the delicacy of her charge, endeavoured to remove every feeling of dependance by the most marked partiality. Her kindness, however, only increased the umbrage against Lyna which it gave to many who witnessed and feared its result, and finding no plea openly to censure her, they at length imputed to art that disinterestedness to which they themselves were strangers.

Thus had Lyna reached her nineteenth year when, for the first time, she separated from her benefactress to visit some early friends of her mother, lately settled in the Isle of Wight; where she became not only an object of interest, but of affection, and feeling almost alone in the world, there was

a charm so new to her in hearing her mother's name, something in the very tie of "my mother's friends," so unknown to her before, that it seemed to bind her tenfold to such an endearing connexion, so that she returned from Niton Grove, full of nothing but the kindness of "the dear *St.* Williams'."

On the arrival of Mrs. Grentham, who, to please Lady Catherine, had always professed the warmest affection to Lyna, she, with all the unreserve of an unguarded heart, expatiated upon the charms of Niton Grove, till the subject became so constantly her theme that it excited something of jealousy in Lady Catherine, which was not lost to the penetration of her guest, who therefore hailed it as an auspicious omen for herself.

One morning when the letters, as usual, were brought at breakfast to Lady Catherine, one was directed to Lyna in a hand-writing unknown to her Ladyship. Suspicion is easily excited in a heart opened by any feeling of jealousy to receive it, and giving

the letter to its owner she fixed so penetrating a look on her countenance, that it immediately produced a deep blush. For this Lyna could have assigned no cause, for it was one of bashfulness, not of shame; yet the circumstance seemed to corroborate the opinion of Lady Catherine, that all was not right, and, thought she, "I am no longer dear to Lyna, else why that confusion and reserve?" She remained, however, quite silent, determined to see how long Lyna would retain the letter without communicating its contents; that day and two more passed, yet nothing was said on the subject by either party. Lyna felt sure that Lady Catherine did not speak to her in her usual tone of tenderness, though unconscious of her own share in the mischief, and perfectly at a loss to conjecture the cause of so sudden a coldness, she could only attribute it to some private anxiety, and endeavoured, under this idea, to chace every painful uneasiness from her own mind; yet this very effort threw over her manners and countenance a restraint, which only added tenfold to

the flame kindling against her. On the third day another letter arrived, in the same unknown writing, which however caused nothing of the confusion of the preceding, the enquiry from whence the letter came, being simply answered "from Niton Grove." This indifference was immediately deemed "absolute effrontery," but no further notice was taken of the circumstance. On Lyna's leaving the room, Mrs. Grentham said, "I suppose Lyna frequently corresponds with her new friends; dear girl, she seems so fond of them it is quite delightful to hear her speak so gratefully of their kindness to her."

"Very delightful indeed," replied Lady Catherine, with a frown of evident displeasure, "and their correspondence seems equally a delight to her, although I am not favored with any particulars of the communication; but," added she, forcing a cheerful tone of voice, fearful of betraying her real feelings, "it is quite natural, very natural, and Lyna knows I never wish to interfere with any of her pleasures."

"Oh! I am sure," said Mrs. Grentham, "that she fully appreciates your indulgence, and with regard to the St. Williams', she may safely avail herself of your confidence in her discretion; for they are, I believe, excellent people; indeed I have heard them called quite an evangelical family."

"Evangelical!" exclaimed Lady Catherine, "surely they are not dissenters?"

"Oh no!" replied the insinuating Mrs. Grentham, "they belong to the church; though I fancy they are very *liberal* towards all seceders, at least Lyna told me that she had been with them to a meeting held for the foreign missionary society, where she heard a most eloquent address in its behalf, from the celebrated dissenting minister, Dr. Lewis, and that Mr. St. Williams, who was there as its president, subscribed most liberally."

"It is somewhat extraordinary," returned Lady Catherine, "that I have never before heard of this meeting; yet I can scarcely believe that Lyna could have gone there, knowing my great objection to every thing

of the kind: not that I feel any degree of ill-will towards dissenters—no, no, far from it; but it is inconsistent, perfectly so, for church and anti-church to unite; however, it is all very right, very natural, that Lyna should follow the wishes of her new friends; very natural indeed that she should prefer the confidence of younger companions. I am now too old to be the associate, the confidante of youth—but it is very natural."

Lady Catherine could no longer conceal the agitation of her mind, and Mrs. Grentham hailing it as a moment not to be lost, took care to follow up her insinuations. She therefore pretended not to see their effects upon her Ladyship, as she replied, "No doubt, she only went to oblige Mr. St. Williams, or indeed I may have misunderstood her, but if otherwise I dare say she scarcely thought the circumstance worth mentioning, and probably appears reserved only from the fear of intruding an uninteresting conversation, which she knows the pursuits of giddy youth must prove to those of maturer minds."

"Very natural indeed," replied Lady Catherine; "I am now an old woman, and she cannot enter into my feelings of interest and solicitude in every thing where she is concerned; but as you are fortunately a few years younger than myself, perhaps you may be privileged to know who are her correspondents at Niton Grove?"

"Why, really," said Mrs. Grentham, "I do not know of any other than Miss St. Williams, unless indeed it be that young man, who is a nephew to Mr. St. Williams and a sort of relation I believe to Lyna; though really I have no right to infer that he corresponds with her, only, I have heard Lyna say she was very fond of her "poor mother's godson."

Lady Catherine was now wounded to the very quick; but still too uneasy to rest under these anxious suspicions, she hastily entered Lyna's room, resolved to know the truth. Endeavouring, however, to conceal her anxiety as much as possible, she began some common place remarks, till assuming an air of calm indifference, she said, "Pray

may I ask from whom you heard this morning?"

Lyna, evidently embarrassed, replied, "It was from Niton," and endeavoured to turn the question, adding, "The St. Williams' talk of going to London shortly."

Lady Catherine, who fixed her countenance steadily on Lyna, and seeing her change colour, could no longer act a calmness so far from her heart, exclaimed, "Prevaricating girl! the St. Williams', I suppose, can have little to do with a correspondence so carefully concealed from your best friend"—so saying she hastily left the room, and tormented by the most painful emotions, she believed there was at once an end of all her high raised hopes; and instead of the beloved child of her heart, she now only saw in Lyna all that was ungrateful and fatal to her hopes.

In the mean time, poor Lyna almost thought her senses deceived her, but in a few minutes, recollecting what had passed, she said within herself, "And is it then possible that Lady Catherine's late coldness

proceeded from my silence respecting these letters? Surely she must, she ought to have known my heart too well to suppose any thing concealed in it concerning myself! and yet I have been to blame in withholding from her who is indeed my 'best friend,' at least the assurance, that although honor prevented my showing her the letters, they related wholly to the affair of another: and then she would have trusted and still have loved me; but I am always doing wrong, thoughtless even of the happiness of those whom I most fondly, most dearly love."

She then thought of immediately throwing herself on the indulgence of Lady Catherine, explaining what appeared mysterious and entreating forgiveness for the rest; but as she knew her Ladyship's temper, when once irritated, was not easily subdued to receive any new excitement, she prudently determined to await the evening for all further explanation, and till then to absent herself as much as possible from the presence of Lady Catherine. Gladly did she hail the close of that day, the first

she had known of misery since Laylands had been her home; for never had it been so clouded by the displeasure of her, whose smiles had hitherto brightened every hour. Trembling she followed Lady Catherine into her room, as soon as she heard her retire for the night, and falling on her bosom entreated her to say, how she had offended, and to forgive her before she slept, as she could not bear another day of such displeasure.

After much of reproach on one side and of contrition on the other, the subject was at length brought to its point; but Lady Catherine refusing to hear any justification respecting the letters, only replied, "I will hear no more about them—I forgive you, Lyna, with all my heart I forgive you, but do not talk to me again of confidence, gratitude, and all such hyperbolical expressions; I do not require them, and have been unreasonable, very unreasonable, in expecting them from you. You are now of an age to be your own mistress, and it is very natural that you should seek a dearer

and more pleasing friendship than that which an old woman can offer; therefore Lyna, write to, or hear from whom you please, henceforth I promise never to interfere in your correspondence, and as a surety against it, believe me I will not again expose myself to deceit, or you to the meanness of deception; for when you answered me this morning, that you had heard from the St. Williams', surely that was a most unprovoked, deliberate falsehood?"

"Indeed," said Lyna, really distressed, "I did not tell you so, for if you remember I said the letter came from Niton Grove; that was no untruth, though I confess I was very wrong even to prevaricate; but I now entreat from you the justice of reading both these unfortunate letters; they will explain all my motives for concealment, and on your honor I know I may safely depend, as fearlessly as upon your indulgence, in exculpating me from every appearance now against me."

This was said with a look of such earnest entreaty, and in a tone of so much simpli-

city, that Lady Catherine no longer refused to comply; she therefore took the letters, saying, "Before I read them, Lyna, tell me how you could be induced to enter a correspondence with a young man of so recent an acquaintance?"

"I have entered into no correspondence," replied Lyna; "Robert Morton, as a relation and godson of my poor mother, I confess, awakened my compassion and interest: he appeared to me both unfortunate and deserving, and having placed confidence in my discretion by relating all the particulars of his situation, which perhaps is always flattering to those so trusted, on leaving Niton I assured him of my friendship, if at any time it could be of service to him; thus was the promise perhaps imprudently given, of interesting myself in his behalf, should circumstances ever permit it; thus honor, not reserve, prevented my speaking to you of letters not in any way concerning myself."

Lady Catherine now appeared more satisfied, and opening the letters, she found

them exactly corresponding to the story of Lyna; the first was requesting the loan of ten pounds in consequence of difficulties most honorably accounted for; it was throughout expressive of gratitude and esteem, but the language was perfectly delicate, unassuming, and respectful, without one word which the most fastidious could have construed into any thing like familiarity. A copy of its reply was folded within, the whole tenor of which was simplicity itself; bearing the most artless solicitude and generous candor, but not a sentence throughout the whole, which the relationship of the writer did not fully justify. The last letter, received that morning, was in acknowledgment of Lyna's kindness, returning the ten pounds she had sent, as circumstances had since occurred to render the loan unnecessary, and concluded by a long farewell, the writer being then on the point of leaving England to rejoin his regiment in the Brazils.

Lady Catherine, ashamed of her own hastiness, yet too proud to confess how

much of blame rested on herself, returned the letters to Lyna with her usual smile of fondness, and affectionately embracing her, she exclaimed, "This, my Lyna, has been a chapter of errors, and equal fault rests with us both, therefore let us mutually forgive, and from this hour you will be as dear to me as ever." After some further conversation the subject was closed, and happiness seemed for a time perfectly restored, to the no small mortification of Mrs. Grentham.

It is human nature, that when once the heart is opened to the suggestions of jealousy, the object which has excited it becomes ever after one of painfully tenacious observation, which is often allowed to overcome the more sober reasonings of good sense. We endeavour to control the force of prejudice, yet still we cherish its suspicions, till alas! many a sad reality of misery is thus reared on the slightest fabric of imagination!

So it was with Lady Catherine; she had acknowledged that her over anxiety where

Lyna was concerned sometimes awakened groundless and illiberal fears; but now the cloud was dispersed, and Lyna was again restored to her opinion as a being almost faultless, and for the time she felt sure that no circumstance could again create mistrust towards one who, at least, seemed to deserve the confidence of those who loved her. Yet from that period, Lady Catherine became so watchful over every word, look, and action of her charge, that each was constantly subject to misinterpretation. If she became more thoughtful than usual, the change was attributed to restraint; if more lively, to some happy circumstance that she thought proper to conceal. If she talked too little, she was reserved; if too much, she was tiresome and indifferent to the comforts of old age, which she might suppose unequal to bear the constant flow of such unrestrained spirits.

In this frame of temper did Lady Catherine constantly expose herself and Lyna to pain and mortification; and while she constantly endeavoured to secure the happiness

of her charge by the most generous sacrifices of self-interest, she frustrated it all by being too narrowly watchful over her.

It was at this unfortunate period that Lady Catherine and Lyna went to pass a fortnight at Gloucester with Mrs. Grentham, who then seized every opportunity of obtaining the confidence of Lyna by the most plausible and specious assurances of interest, and often would she observe to her, that her "cheek was less rosy than formerly, or her spirits less buoyant" than they were wont to be; "tell me then, dear Lyna," she would say, "can care have yet reached that young heart, or anxiety have intruded itself, envious of the happiness which fain would claim you as her own?" Lyna felt grateful for this solicitude, and although she generally concealed every thought of pain for which she only blamed herself, she one day incautiously answered, "You know every situation has its cares, but I am and ought to be very happy, for Lady Catherine is every thing to me; but sometimes I am wicked enough to think enviously of those who have parents

and parental homes, and then I think, had mine lived, I should have been happier in sharing their lot, however humble it had been, than as an orphan surrounded by every comfort in a still dependant state—but this is very ungrateful; for many orphans have never found such a benefactress—such a home."

"Certainly, my love," answered Mrs. Grentham, and few are so idolised even who have parents, but, as you say, dependant situations must always be subject to peculiar trials, and however dear to us a benefactress may be, there are a thousand feelings which to a delicate mind like yours must preclude that union—that confidence of thought, which perhaps can only be enjoyed with those of our own kindred, age, and sentiments, for summer and winter can never blend."

"Dear Mrs. Grentham," replied the unsuspicious girl, "this is exactly what I have often thought, but yet I was afraid I was only deceiving myself by supposing it the sentiments of human nature, when my own heart was more probably thus warring

against its own happiness, and cherishing a discontented ungrateful spirit: but truly do I often yearn for some nearer tie; for though dear Lady Catherine is in every sense of the word like a fond mother to me, yet she seems not quite satisfied, not contented with my affection, and often misunderstands me, which sometimes makes me afraid of saying all I wish, and throws a reserve over me which I am sure she may justly censure, though I try to conquer it, because I know how ungrateful it is."

"Well, dear Lyna," said Mrs. Grentham, "fear not to make a friend of me, I can enter into all your feelings, for I see their justice, and sincerely pity the misery to which dependance must expose a heart like yours."

"Pity me?" exclaimed Lyna, "Oh! do not misunderstand me; never, never was an orphan blest with a benefactress so generous, so indulgent, so very, very good—or with a home so replete with blessings! I only mourn the want of parents, and of kindred ties, not the want of kindness or of any comfort in the power of Lady Catherine to bestow."

Lyna spoke from the heart all that was natural for the heart to feel consistently with that grateful affection with which she desired to accept the blessings of her situation; but she had spoken enough to furnish grounds for art to "twine her mazy spells" —enough to place power in the hands of Mrs. Grentham, who registered every word she heard, resolved to make them subservient to her own interests.

It was not long before an opportunity unexpectedly occurred for this, as Lady Catherine remarked that Lyna certainly was altered, and appeared less robust than usual; "and yet," added her Ladyship, "she assures me that she is well and happy."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Grentham, "the change is evident to every one, but I confess I think it is on her mind more than on her health."

"On her mind! do you then think her unhappy?" said Lady Catherine, evidently displeased; for although the suspicion had sometimes crossed her mind, yet she could

ill bear it corroborated by another; "so far," added her Ladyship," as the power is mine, I am sure Lyna may have every reasonable wish gratified; her happiness is my first wish, and, to promote it, I study the very caprices of youth, that I may conform to them, and if possible excite the confidence which child to mother, sister to sister would enjoy to bestow and share: and yet she for whom I do all this, and could willingly make every sacrifice of selfish comfort, denies me the only return I ask—her confidence; rejects the only boon I desire to see her claim—happiness! But tell me, Mrs. Grentham," added she, taking her hand with an expression of the deepest feeling, "tell me, does she complain of unhappiness? does she wish for any thing in my power to give?"

"Oh no! she does not, I am sure, complain of any thing; at least, I know she endeavours to conquer every feeling of discontent," said Mrs. Grentham, in a tone as if to appear unwarily led to the insinuation, then added, with a fascinating smile, "I

make but an awkward pleader—a bad umpire, for I know not how it is I always make things worse, whenever I attempt to reconcile mistakes; so do not cross-examine me; only rest assured that Lyna feels your kindness, and loves you dearly." "Loves me, Mrs. Grentham! how does she prove it? but tell me all you know, tell me in what arises her discontent: tell me, I entreat you, of what she complains, and I will for ever feel obliged by your candor."

"Indeed, dearest Lady Catherine, you take the matter too seriously; however, since you ask it, I will candidly own to you that I do think her unhappy; but I am sure her misery arises in herself; so I told her, and she confessed it must be so."

"Then she *has* talked even to you of *misery*," said Lady Catherine, turning pale; "Oh, Lyna! you who ought—that might be the happiest—to be so ungrateful, so dissatisfied."

"I fear, my dear Madam," said Mrs. Grentham, "that I have been innocently the cause of this agitation, I will therefore be now perfectly unreserved with you: Lyna is a

very romantic girl, and often, I believe, allows herself to dwell on retrospections more than half-ideal, which have perhaps excited a dislike to the common realities of life, and made her discontented: but may I trust to your indulgence in not repeating it, if I tell you between ourselves all that has fallen under my observation?"

"You may," passively replied her Ladyship, "as if life and death depended on the recital."

"Well then, as passing Lyna's room, I have often seen her in tears, and anxious to discover the cause of this secret distress, I one day ventured to enter and offer consolation if in my power, but she heeded not my entrance, so intently was she engaged over her mother's picture. I could not but revere the feeling excited by so faithful a remembrance of her parent, and therefore stood for some time silently gazing on the interesting scene, till I saw her replace the picture in her desk, which she did, saying, 'Dear mother, had you lived I should never have known the vicissitudes of a dependant situation.' I then approached her,

and remonstrated on the sin of indulging ungrateful regrets; I urged, that though she was an orphan, few orphans had similar blessings. She perfectly acquiesced, and owned herself wrong, promising more self-command for the future. I then asked her if she could possibly feel unhappy, idolised as she was by your Ladyship; she only replied, that she loved you very much, but that every situation of dependance was irksome; and she confessed that she did yearn for younger and dearer ties than your adoption had bestowed on her; that is, she longed for parents, brothers, and sisters, for she thought no one could supply their place, particularly one so much older than herself, as summer and winter could not unite, and she fears it is thus you do not understand either her mind or heart; but still, dear girl, she is warmly attached to you, and took all the blame to herself. This, I assure you, is all I can with truth assert on the subject; and whenever I have heard it reported that Lyna had not a happy home, I have, you may believe, most warmly con-

tradicted a report so injurious both to your Ladyship and Lyna."

Lady Catherine for some time remained perfectly silent, pale as marble, and agonised by every word she heard; at length she replied: "And does even common report say so? since it had even reached *your* ears, it must indeed be believed as well founded. Who then but Lyna could have given it birth? Well, be it so: I have been injudicious, I have been presumptuous: I had every blessing which a merciful Providence could bestow—peace, character, wealth, happiness; yet, not satisfied with these, I sought another in an adopted child, and on her I fondly rested, as a wayward infant clings to the reed, which breaking only draws him to danger or to death. In her I thought old age would find joy, comfort, and support; yet she, that very child, has wounded the heart which so long has fostered her, and has destroyed those fairy visions, which her happiness alone made bright to my too credulous imagination: but she shall now be free, and may she find

"a better, a kinder benefactress—and a home more suited to her fancy! For the rest, I will bear it, and no longer clinging to any child of earth, seek more earnestly that strength which is ever sufficient to bear us up in the dark valley of affliction, and even in the shades of death."

Mrs. Grentham marked the workings of Lady Catherine's feelings, and began to think she had gone too far; she therefore replied, "Indeed your Ladyship thinks too seriously of all this; Lyna is a romantic, but I believe her to be an affectionate girl, upon whom kindness is not lost." "How does she accept it?" interrupted her Ladyship, "by making me appear to the world as cruelly abusing the sacred charge I have undertaken, and herself as the victim of a hard-hearted and rigorous disciplinarian? This, Mrs. Grentham, is beyond the mere weakness of a romantic imagination. To obtain, I suppose, an interesting commiseration, she has basely and ungratefully sacrificed, not only her own veracity, but my character! my happiness!"—

"Your Ladyship's character," replied Mrs. Grentham, really alarmed, "can never be impeached even by the breath of calumny. You have too many friends to guard it, too many living proofs of goodness, to fall beneath the power of any false report; therefore fear not, and be assured Lyna has had no wish of intentionally exposing you to blame: but I see that I have done wrong in confiding to your Ladyship what perhaps ought to have been carefully concealed: but the tender solicitude which I cannot but entertain, (and perhaps feel too keenly to admit of the cooler speculations of good sense) for every thing which can affect your peace, or light upon a name so honored, so endeared as yours, may plead my excuse in having thus transgressed the laws of better judgment: but it was for your sake, Lady Catherine, and for your sake I shall even love to bear all its consequences of blame and reproach."

"Do not be afraid, my dear Mrs. Grentham," replied Lady Catherine, affectionately taking her hand, "believe me,

I estimate your friendship too highly to abuse it; truly do I feel obliged by the part to which it has led you for my sake; therefore trust me fearlessly, you shall never be implicated in my miseries. Lyna shall know nothing of my feelings towards her till my return to Laylands, and trust me, she shall never suspect you as being the author of this information. She must be aware that common report is a ready messenger of evil, and since to this her conduct has exposed me, she must now bear the result; but never will I betray you, who have thus been so kind a guardian over my name and character."

Lady Catherine left the room, nor did she again appear till dinner was announced. She was pale and dejected, but evidently strove to disguise her feelings; nor could any one unacquainted with what had passed, have observed that she was affected by any peculiar distress.

To Lyna her manners were forced; she addressed herself as little as possible to her, but when she did, it was always with an at-

tempt of appearing still kind and affectionate: but this could not veil to Lyna's watchful heart the restraint which was thus disguised; yet, now too much accustomed to these changes, she had learnt to bear them in silence, and patiently to endure the anguish they inflicted.

The remainder of the visit, however, passed heavily to all; each acted a part foreign to their feelings. Mrs. Grentham, when unobserved by Lady Catherine, treated Lyna with the utmost affection and confidence, fearful lest she might afterwards suspect her to be the author of Lady Catherine's displeasure. She therefore flattered, caressed, and indulged her, constantly assuring her that Lady Catherine's manner arose merely from the tenacity of old age, and perhaps in part from the worry to which so large an establishment must expose her; thus artfully endeavouring to create discontent in Lyna's mind, and to soothe her into the belief of fond commiseration.

This kindness relieved poor Lyna in

some degree from the restraint she must otherwise have endured; but still, when she heard an early day decided for their return to Laylands, she hailed it—as any change would then perhaps have been—as one that might again restore peace and comfort both to herself and benefactress.

She parted indeed from Mrs. Grentham, as from one who had shared many an hour of heart-felt misery, and when at the last moment Mrs. Grentham assured her of continued affection, and entreated her fearlessly to confide all her sorrows to her, promising consolation and assistance whenever she might stand in need of them; she felt as if she would have given the universe to prolong the comfort of retaining such a friend near her.

The entrance of Lady Catherine here prevented all further conversation, and after affectionately taking leave of Mrs. Grentham, she desired Lyna to get into the carriage, and in a few minutes lost sight of Gloucester.

The first ten miles of their journey was

passed in silence by both parties; after which Lady Catherine talked incessantly on every trifling incident she could think of: the weather, the roads, the people, were themes of endless remark, as if afraid a silent moment would produce any thing like a personal observation. Thus they reached Laylands, and on entering, Lyna, as much fatigued in mind as body, threw herself upon the nearest couch, and exclaimed, "Oh! how thankful I am to be once more at dear, dear Laylands! earnestly do I wish that I had never seen another place, and that we had never known any one but each other."

"Laylands," replied Lady Catherine, sarcastically, "would feel much flattered could it be sensible of the honor of your preference; though I presume it would demand a more *consistent* affection," and then adding in a suppressed voice, "Dissembling hypocrite," she immediately left the room. Shortly after, she sent word to Lyna that she did not intend returning to the parlour that night, as being tired, she wished to re-

main undisturbed, but begged her doing so might not interfere with Miss Stanhope's intentions for the disposal of her evening.

Lyna gladly availed herself of the reprieve thus granted, to retire to her own room, where, shut out from the world, she endeavoured to fortify her mind by seeking that peace which can be found only in the promises of an eternal God.

The next day passed miserably to both parties, for both were acting under the painful restraint of concealed feelings; the one endeavouring to *find* conversation,—the other to *avert* it. On the same evening, when each had retired to their rooms, Ellis, the confidential servant of Lady Catherine, brought Lyna a letter from her mistress, saying it was not to be answered that night. Lyna opened it with a hope that it would lead to some explanation of events, to her, so incomprehensible; what then was her surprise on reading the following note?

"Common report, which I understand has for some time severely censured my con-

duct, at length speaks too openly to conceal from me that it is solely from the specious and melancholy complaints of the 'ill-treated Miss Stanhope,' that I am held up to the world, as abusing the sacred trust which I had undertaken in the care of a young orphan. I therefore beg to assure you that 'dear Laylands' need no longer be to you a home, subject to the 'peculiar trials of a dependant situation,' and that from this hour you are at liberty to consider yourself released from every irksome obligation of an adopted child; since our mutual comfort, being thus for ever disturbed, can no longer be augmented by the continuance of that forced cheerfulness, restrained attentions, and the mere *professions* of affection, under which you have so long suffered! It is not in my power to restore to you the parents and parental home over which you so unceasingly lament; but I truly regret that all those endeavours, which have on my part been so strenuously exerted to supply their place, have so completely failed.

"I can with truth assert, that my enjoyments have chiefly centered in promoting yours, for which you have been my first and fondest object! yet all this has been ineffectual to secure your happiness, and in the midst of every comfort my fortune could command, I see you spiritless, indifferent, and discontented!—Laylands, instead of being a cherished home, is now become to you only a secondary interest, and *I*— as a severe guardian, rather than the friend and confidante, I have long vainly wished to be. This, Lyna, cannot be flattering to me, anxious as I have been to make it otherwise.

"Of myself, however, I shall say nothing —ingratitude and disappointment are but trials common to this life—but mutual happiness can never exist between us, since, on the one hand, suspicion, and on the other, fear and reserve, must ever militate against all comfort—all enjoyment! I therefore now release you from so hard a fate; you may go and seek those ties of dearer and younger friends for which you yearn, though Laylands shall still be your home whenever you wish it; but remember, that our in-

terests can no longer be united—and our establishment and pursuits must henceforth be separate.

"Thus, Lyna, have I been perfectly candid, nor need you attempt to justify a conduct which can admit of no palliative. For the rest—I forgive you, and though you think me unjustly severe and unreasonable, I have been and still remain,

Your sincere friend,

C. Foster.

For some time, Lyna held the letter in her hand, scarcely aware whether she could be in her senses; she perused and reperused it many times before she could convince herself that she read it rightly, or that the writer of it could be Lady Catherine: at length, rousing herself from the stupor into which its contents had thrown her, she determined to go immediately to her benefactress, and demand who were the authors of such unjust and cruel calumny, which had evidently been invented against her; but feeling herself unequal to encounter the task, she sat down more prudently

to write her reply, assured she could justify herself from every imputation of ingratitude. This she did, and with the hope of finding Lady Catherine still up, she took it to Ellis, requesting her to convey it immediately to her mistress; but it was returned in a few minutes with the following lines written in the envelope:

"Lady C. Foster begs to return the enclosed to Miss Stanhope unopened, being anxious to avoid all needless discussion, convinced that no explanation can obviate the truth upon which Lady Catherine has acted; she therefore has only to request that Miss Stanhope may be guided by her own inclinations to follow the path most pleasing to herself."

Lyna now seemed at once thrown upon the world, an orphan indeed; more than ever at a loss to conjecture what were the reports, which thus had bereaved her of the only tie that gave her a claim to home and all its blessings. She sat down bewildered as in a dream by such strange, such incomprehensible events! She thought alternately

of all Lady Catherine's friends, assured that none but an intimate one could have influenced her benefactress against her. Could it be the kind-hearted, the generous Mrs. Richards? Oh no! for her expressions of kindness towards her had borne the very stamp of truth. Could it be Miss Herald? Although she had often appeared jealous of the praise which is often injudiciously bestowed on a favorite, surely she could not be such a hypocrite, as to have raised a tale of calumny against one on whom she had lavished such professions of affection. Lyna thought her artful, worldly-minded, but she could not think her so basely wicked —and for what purpose? Could it be Harriet Morley? She was a thoughtless ill-judging girl, and had often said that she did not envy Lyna's situation, as she would not "live with an old woman for the world" —yet she was generous to a fault; and even supposing that in a moment of high spirits she had been led to insinuate any thing of the kind to Lady Catherine, she would have been miserable in implicating any human

being by her thoughtlessness, and would have known no peace, have spared no sacrifice, to see mistakes rectified to which she had given birth.

Mrs. Grentham was the last she thought of in the catalogue of intimate friends—but she would not, could not allow a suspicion to fall on one from whom she had received so much kindness; and "Mrs. Grentham would be the last," thought Lyna, "to pain Lady Catherine or injure me—to whom then but to her can I apply for comfort and advice? What am I to do, or how to act? Lady Catherine will hear nothing from me, but she would believe every thing from Mrs. Grentham, and she could plead my cause with truth, for she knows all, and might perhaps restore us from the misery of these strange mistakes." With this hope Lyna would take no rest until she had written all her grievances most unreservedly to Mrs. Grentham, fully confiding in her affection and discretion; and feeling somewhat relieved by having done so, she sought a rest from care in the protection of the Almighty,

and leaving all to Him, slept undisturbed, even in the midst of injury and misfortune.

The next morning Ellis came into her room, bringing her the keys from Lady Catherine, who begged that Lyna would make breakfast, as she purposed taking it in her own room, but as she was going out for the day, requested Miss Stanhope would amuse herself as she liked best. All this deeply added to the wretchedness of poor Lyna; she longed to go to Lady Catherine, yet dreaded that it might prove unavailing, and by intruding at such a moment perhaps make things worse; she therefore resolved to wait until Lady Catherine came down stairs; but this she did not do till the carriage waited for her, when, on meeting Lyna, she merely returned a cold salutation, and hastily drove from Laylands.

Lyna was often thought an insipid, spiritless girl, but when roused to act for herself, was sometimes known to do so with decision and courage.

Almost broken-hearted by this last repulse, she hastened to her room, and ear-

nestly imploring the guidance of the Almighty, she began seriously to reflect what means she had best pursue to relieve her situation. On going to her desk, once more to reperuse Lady Catherine's letter, she found on it a packet containing twenty pounds, on which was simply written "Miss Stanhope's quarterly allowance." This was the first time it had ever been given to her in the form of wages; and on seeing it thus addressed, pride instantly flushed across her, and gave a firmness, which no other feeling could then perhaps have done: rousing from a momentary lethargy, she exclaimed, "No, Lady Catherine! since I have ceased to be a comfort to you, I will not stay to be a burden; when you loved me, your generosity was indeed a source of pleasure as well as of grateful affection, but having lost this, Laylands would be a prison—not a home, and my residence in it, servitude—not happiness. You shall not again be obliged to seek the society of strangers to avoid mine, but shall soon be freed from the presence of one so hateful, so distressing to you!" Thus

thought Lyna, and giving way to an ungoverned pride, resolved to quit Laylands before Lady Catherine returned; but after a more reasonable deliberation, her better judgment prevailed, and she determined patiently to await Lady Catherine's return; when she would claim an immediate interview, and if she could then obtain no satisfactory explanation, she would at once decide on leaving Laylands, and would be guided by the advice of Mrs. Grentham, as to what course she should afterwards pursue, waiting only till she could receive an answer from that lady to her last letter. With this resolution she became somewhat more comfortable, and sought employment as the surest resource under her present trials, till summoned for the first time to take a solitary dinner. The meal had evidently been ordered more than usually abundant, and having tasted sparingly of a part, she passedthe remainder of the evening trembling at every sound, yet anxiously awaiting the hour on which the fate of her life now seemed to rest.

Lady Catherine at length arrived, and Lyna summoning all her fortitude, followed her to her room, and closing the door requested the favor of an hour's conversation. Lady Catherine stood for a moment as if hesitating whether or no she should grant the demanded interview, then beckoning Ellis to leave the room, she desired Lyna to sit down, and said "she was ready to receive her commands."

"Not commands," said Lyna, "but I hope every justification, as, if I fail in exonerating myself from your accusations of falsehood and ingratitude, I can no longer wish to remain a burden upon your generosity."

Lady Catherine remained calm and silent, but most firmly implacable; she listened, as if determined to doubt every word, to misunderstand every look coming from Lyna, and only replied with the most unbending hauteur, "As you please, Miss Stanhope, pray follow your own inclinations; mine can be but very secondary considerations." Lyna finding all her endeavours to conciliate were thus so perfectly un-

availing, merely added, that immediately on receiving a reply from Mrs. Grentham, to whom she had written on the subject, she would no longer intrude on the bounty of her Ladyship."

All this did but add to the displeasure of Lady Catherine, and the distress of Lyna; both too proud and too much pained to meet argument patiently and judiciously, each made the misery of the other, by yielding to the impulse of pride rather than to the voice of reason and justice.

Miserably passed the ensuing three days, Lady Catherine and Lyna met only at meals, and then almost in silence. Lyna waited anxiously for her letter, and wondered why it was so long delayed; but she was little experienced in the world, where favor soon flies with fortune, and confiding too much in its smiles, she had yet to learn how deceitful they may prove when tried by the ordeal of adversity.

On the fourth day the post came in, yet brought no letter for Lyna; and just as she was debating about writing again, Ellis

brought her a packet from Lady Catherine, in which was enclosed the long expected, long wished for letter from Mrs. Grentham; and as it will of itself sufficiently account for all the anguish, surprise, and mortification, that poor Lyna experienced, we will copy its contents verbatim.

"I cannot but feel surprised at your having made an application for advice and assistance to one so attached to the interests of Lady Catherine Foster, when you must be aware how little I can feel inclined to uphold one who in rebelling against the peace, the happiness, and the character of so generous a benefactress, must lose every claim to my continued kindness. Your letter needs little comment, as it only accords with that species of hypocrisy you have lately thought proper to adopt, for purposes which, however mysterious they seem to be, must be well known to yourself. You say that on my 'friendship and indulgence you rely in the present hour of trial;' but you forget that both were offered under the belief that you were deserving

of them; but when I find, by undoubted authority, that you have falsely calumniated, by every disgraceful insinuation, the name that ought to have been the most cherished, the most endeared to you, do you suppose that I shall longer countenance the serpent, who by such plausible misrepresentation has stung the bosom which has so fondly fostered it from infancy till now. When I heard you lament the miserable restraint and undue severity to which you were exposed by the tenacious temper of old age, you may remember how earnestly I endeavoured to check the discontent, which I then felt assured arose solely from the weakness of a romantic mind; and acting from this belief, although I could not but condemn, I sincerely pitied you, trusting that time, together with the forbearance and continued generosity of your benefactress, might restore you to yourself and awaken the gratitude which is so justly her due. But now a too well authenticated report has opened my conviction of your real character: from Lady

Catherine I have heard nothing; silently has she long borne the anguish of ill requited benevolence, for little did I suppose when at Laylands the cause of her anxiety was your conduct. Thus, Lyna, have I been candid with you, as henceforth all intercourse between us must be at an end. I enclose this letter to Lady Catherine with a request that she may read it previously to her giving it you, as, after the circumstances which have lately come to my knowledge, I can no longer feel secure in trusting to your veracity.

GEORGIANA GRENTHAM."

This letter was accompanied by the following lines from Lady Catherine :—

"Lady C. Foster presumes that Miss Stanhope will now no longer seek to justify herself from 'falsehood and ingratitude,' and therefore begs she will not trouble herself to intrude the subject again on Lady Catherine, but freed from every restraint will act entirely as best suits her convenience and inclinations."

Lyna had hitherto endeavoured to receive with patience the accumulated trials which the last week had produced, under the hope that the light of truth would soon disperse the cloud which had so strangely gathered over her; but this last trial was more than she could bear; and as the conviction now flashed across her, of the treachery of one who had professed and appeared to be her kindest friend, she sunk exhausted on a chair, and bursting into an agony of tears exclaimed, "Merciful Father! be thou my friend and guide, and forgive the wretched calumniators who would thus drive an orphan from her only home." Soon however recovering herself, she felt the necessity of immediate exertion. To leave Laylands she was resolved, yet whither could she go? homeless and having few friends, where could she seek a refuge? The St. Williams' were from home, of Mr. Morton she had heard nothing for years, and she knew no one else of whom she could ask a temporary home. Mrs. Warton then arose to her recollection as her mother's friend; but

the difference of religious opinions between her and Lady Catherine having precluded all intimacy, Lyna felt scarcely privileged to claim her assistance, stranger as she almost was to her. "Yet," thought she, "for my poor mother's sake, she will not, I am sure, refuse to grant me her protection and advice, until I can seek a less dependent situation." She therefore determined to go that evening to Ashfield, and went immediately to seek Lady Catherine, that she might inform her of her intentions; but she found her Ladyship was again gone out, and had left a servant and horse with a message, that they were at Miss Stanhope's command, in case she might wish to ride. Lyna then returned to her room, and having made the necessary arrangements for quitting, she wrote a few lines to Lady Catherine, bidding her farewell and promising never again to intrude herself at Laylands, till justice had fully cleared her from every imputation by which she now stood so deeply injured.

This done, she ordered the poney-chaise

to convey her to Ashfield, and telling Ellis that she should not return again that night, but would send her word in a day or two respecting the disposal of her trunks, she took a hurried leave and bade farewell to a home, which for years had been so endeared to her.

Arrived at Ashfield, she was received as benevolence ever receives the unfortunate; and throwing herself on the protection of Mrs. Warton, she simply related all she knew of the circumstances which had compelled her to leave Laylands. Mrs. Warton listened to her tale of sorrow with mingled surprise and compassion; she read Mrs. Grentham's letter with deep attention, and having known her well in early life, she believed her to be fully capable of any duplicity where her own interests were concerned. She could not wholly justify Lyna from being too hasty and too proud with a benefactress who might certainly have claimed the utmost patience and forbearance; but in all Lyna's replies to the various questions of Mrs. Warton, there was

such an ingenuous simplicity, that she felt assured there was much of injury towards Lyna and of mistake on the part of Lady Catherine.

She therefore bade Lyna be comforted, and under the consciousness of innocence, she might fearlessly rely on the protection of the Almighty, who would not forsake the fatherless in their distress. For the rest, she offered her a home as long as she could feel happy in one so humble. Lyna, who had lately been unaccustomed to the voice of kindness, felt almost overcome by that of Mrs. Warton. The events and various occupations of the day had prevented her dwelling on melancholy retrospections, or on the sad prospects which were now open before her; but when alone for the night, she found herself in a strange room and under a strange roof, every remembrance of Lady Catherine —of Laylands, and of all those happy days which she had enjoyed when surrounded by home, by friends, and by kindness—it was then she was awakened to the real sense of her situation and unable to conquer

the feelings of anguish which it produced: she became feverish and ill, and passed such a night of restlessness as almost amounted to delirium. The next morning Mrs. Warton found her really unwell; exhausted both in mind and body she scarcely seemed to know what she said or did; but the affectionate and kind nursing of the benevolent Mrs. Warton, together with the rest and quietness she enjoyed, soon restored her to herself, and in a few days she was able to leave her room, recovered to comparative health, and though far from being in her usual spirits she was resigned and cheerful.

We need not detail the mingled feelings of Lady Catherine, on finding that Lyna had really left her; believing herself to be the victim of ingratitude, they were such as must have been excited in every generous breast, under similar circumstances; and it was shortly after that period, that Mrs. Warton, accompanied by Herbert, went to Laylands, where we left them at the commencement of this story.

They were ushered into an elegant library, where they found Lady Catherine busily employed in arranging papers, assisted by a Lady introduced to them as Miss Herald, whose countenance was not the most prepossessing, and her dress in the light garb of youth could ill conceal the ravages of forty years. She was staying at Laylands as comforter to Lady Catherine, being one of those family opiates, who are always at command either to lull or excite the minds of their employers, as circumstances may dictate to be the most politic.

Lady Catherine rose to receive her guests with an ease natural to those long habituated to practise it, but a deep flush crossed her countenance as she guessed what might be the purport of so unusual a visit: it was however momentary, and immediately recovering herself she said, with a haughty smile, "A visit from you, my dear madam, is now so rare a pleasure, that I can scarcely take to myself the compliment it might otherwise imply."

"I confess it to be one of business more

than etiquette or pleasure," replied Mrs. Warton, "but I hope the one is not always incompatible with the other; and in applying for the justice of your Ladyship, I feel assured that an errand requiring it can scarcely be misunderstood."

This was at first only answered by a slight inclination of the head; but finding that Mrs. Warton continued silent evidently to afford an opportunity for Miss Herald to leave the room, Lady Catherine said, "Whatever your business may be, Mrs. Warton, it need be no secret from my friend Miss Herald; speak unreservedly therefore, and I hope you will not find me either so illiberal or unjust as I have probably been *represented* to you."

"I have never heard either illiberality or injustice attached to the name of Lady Catherine Foster," replied Mrs. Warton, "I am, however, now here in behalf of Miss Stanhope, who is at present under my protection; and as I believe much of mistake has produced the displeasure of your Ladyship against her, I am desirous of

knowing upon what foundation she has been accused of ingratitude and calumny? a little explanation may, and I hope will, restore her to your affection and confidence, in which for so many years she found comfort and happiness."

"Miss Stanhope," replied Lady Catherine, "has herself forfeited both the one and the other, nor can any explanation now exonerate her from the charge which has been but too clearly proved. She, no doubt, has forged upon you a very plausible story, and it would be somewhat difficult to unravel the mystery of her hypocrisy: it is therefore a subject I will not hear discussed, yet in justice to the benevolence which I know actuates you in every cause you undertake, I will hear with patience, and answer with candor, any question you may now wish to ask; but remember, Mrs. Warton, it must be the last time her name is ever mentioned between us. I have said, and I repeat it," added her Ladyship, raising her voice, "that hence-

forth whoever mentions it again in my presence will incur my utmost displeasure."

"So let it be," replied Mrs. Warton, "and I only regret that I am even now compelled to intrude a theme so painful to your Ladyship." She then continued to state most impartially all that appeared to favor the cause of Lyna, without attaching any thing like blame to Lady Catherine; but her Ladyship would hear nothing in vindication of her conduct, for believing Mrs. Grentham's letter to be an unanswerable evidence of her guilt, every argument against it only strengthened her conviction of Lyna's duplicity. After a long discussion, therefore, Mrs. Warton took her leave, finding that all her efforts to reconcile the parties were unavailing. She had, however, heard enough to feel satisfied, that Lyna was more "sinned against than sinning"—that Lady Catherine was truly to be pitied, as having been deceived into a belief of injury, and that the mischief might clearly be traced to the treachery of the insinuating Mrs. Gren-

tham. She therefore returned home, satisfied that she might safely continue Lyna's friend, convinced that in God's good time, innocence would stand attested even in the sight of man.

Lady Catherine, ever since the departure of Miss Stanhope appeared to the world in unusually good spirits; but Ellis said, that more than once she found her mistress in the room which was Lyna's, leaning mournfully on the unstrung harp, to which, but a few months before, she had listened with such fond delight;—but she who excited it, could never again awaken that harmony, which her very ingratitude had disturbed, and the heart which so long and so dearly had cherished it, was left like that harp—neglected by the very hand, whose touch so often had soothed the hours of sickness and of pain!

But the trial was over, and the past remained only as a dream, from which she was awakened by the sad remembrances of ill requited affection.

Lyna was not long in meeting the sym-

pathy of her friends the St. Williams', whose kindness to her increased tenfold under the trials which rendered it the more essential and valuable. She received a most cordial invitation from them, with an assurance that however others might condemn, the voice of a multitude could never influence them against her. They also mentioned their wish of having a governess for the two younger girls, and as they understood that Lyna wished for such a situation, they offered it to her in so delicate and generous a manner, that it was left entirely to her own feelings either to take or to reject it, without any possible blame of inconsistency. This however she most gladly accepted, and leaving Mrs. Warton with a heavy heart, full of gratitude for the maternal kindness she had received from her, she entered a new life of care and anxiety, to which hitherto she had been a stranger. But the St. Williams', were not those who considered a governess only as a dependent, forming a part of their establishment; they regarded her as one who shared

the most arduous of a parent's care; as a friend, to whom their dearest interests were consigned; and grateful to her for the improvements of the children, they not only endeavoured by every delicate attention, to mitigate the anxious task which devolved upon her, but by every kindness to subdue the remembrance that she was not, like them, blest with family and home.

Thus released from the charge of Lyna, Mrs. Warton declared herself at liberty to accompany Herbert and his sister to Llanvair, whenever they would fix a time for their journey.

This was heard with equal pleasure by all parties; Louis was accordingly sent for, and Ellen hastened the preparations with all the zeal of one delighted at the prospect of novelty.

Leaving Caroline Herbert was the only drawback to the anticipated pleasure now before her; but she gave a faithful promise of writing "very often," while Caroline on the other hand urged her to think often of Durnford, and above all, not to become a

methodist; though she scarcely saw how she could escape, for she had heard that Llanvair was a very "tabernacle of psalm singing and perfection," and that Miss Aubrey, Lady Warton's chosen saint, was now staying there.

This sounded rather appalling to poor Ellen, but she remembered Mrs. Warton, and thought that religion could not after all be so very gloomy. "However," said she, in answer to Caroline's charge, "you know I need not sing psalms with them if I do not like it, and when tired of Llanvair, I can but come home again." With this the friends affectionately parted, and Mrs. Warton, together with her young party, left their homes early on a bright May morning.

## CHAPTER V.

TWILIGHT had scarcely mellowed the last bright tints of an evening sun, when the glen of Calwan first opened to the view of our travellers, and Llanvair appeared behind it, shaded but not concealed by the light mists which hung above its cultivated and romantic valleys. "Here," exclaimed Herbert, as they entered St. Llenards, "rests peace and happiness, for these humble dwellings are enriched by contentment, and simplicity is the only law which governs the manners of these unsophisticated peasants." These eulogiums on the people of St. Llenards would probably have been considerably enlarged had not a light issuing from the window of the Priory attracted a general exclamation; for it had evidently been placed there to show that the tenants of the place were not indifferent to the arrival of their friends; and as they

passed it Mr. Seymour and Fanny were seen waving a handkerchief in token of a cordial greeting; but soon all again disappeared, and while Herbert longed to alight, more immediately to receive the welcome of his earliest friend, Llanvair Hall was thrown open to hail its guests, and in a few moments they were received by Lady Warton with that friendly hospitality which a generous heart enjoys to bestow. The enthusiasm of Herbert's disposition, which was so seldom excited, now animated his every look and word, while Ellen, scarcely less delighted, found something to say in every thing she saw.

Lady Warton took her guests up stairs, knowing the discomforts of a travelling dress; and scarcely had Ellen finished changing hers, when she heard a voice never to be forgotten by her affectionate heart, and running forward in one moment was received on the bosom of her fond and faithful nurse. Lady Warton shared their pleasure in witnessing the happy meeting, while poor old Johnson sobbed and smiled

and kissed her child by turns, saying, as she eyed her from head to foot a dozen times, "Well to be sure how babies do spring up in a few years; why, my Lady, I can't hardly believe that this is my own dear child, that I nursed from her very birth! Well, thank God, I have lived to see her once more—but where's my young master Herbert? I must see him, I must for I can't go away without seeing both my children."

"Here he is," exclaimed Herbert, coming behind her, "almost jealous that he is only second in your thoughts."

She turned round, as if startled by the voice, but there was less of joy than pain expressed by her steady gaze. She took his offered hand and pressing it between both her own, could only say with a trembling inarticulate voice, "I thought to be sure it was my poor master! for never did a son so favor his father! and then sinking on a chair she burst into tears, while each seemed to catch the sadness of her own remembrances. Lady Warton allowed her

a few minutes of indulgence, and then taking her hand said, "Come Johnson, we must not give our friends such a sad meeting, or we shall frighten them away again."

"No, no, I must not indeed," replied Johnson, wiping her eyes, "I won't my Lady, I'll go home now and thank ye kindly for letting me come." She then arose and again taking Herbert's hand, she added without venturing to look at him, "Well, God bless you Master Herbert, I am glad to see ye both, that I am, for I loved ye as though you were my own, but you are so like my poor Master that I could not"—the sentence died upon her lips, and without another look or word, she went down stairs as hastily as her unsteady steps would permit.

This scene had somewhat sobered the spirits of the young people; to Herbert, his father's name always bore a melancholy charm, but never had it been so excited, as by the faithful remembrance of his old servant.

Mrs. Warton here joined them, but as

she seemed so completely fatigued, they all persuaded her to go to bed; to this she made no objection, and therefore wishing her young friends good night, she retired at once to her room, followed by her sister, Lady Warton, who in a few minutes, however, returned to request that her young guests would join the party down stairs.

On entering the drawing-room, she took Ellen by the hand, and introducing her to Miss Aubrey, she said, "I hope, my dear Ellen, you will soon learn to know and love this friend of mine, for, believe me, I anticipate as a real gratification to myself, your being drawn together, and she is, I assure you, no stranger to your name."

Ellen blushed as Miss Aubrey took her hand with one of the sweetest smiles that she had ever seen. Could that be the puritanical, stiff, rigid Miss Aubrey, of, or rather against, whom she had heard so much from the Herberts?—Could it be the same, who had been represented to her, as being too sanctified to enjoy any of the innocent recreations of society?—and who deemed

it a crime either to smile, to sing, to dance, or to play?—for she, of whom she had heard all this, now stood before her, a young and elegant woman, whose dress was neither sackcloth, nor brown drugget, but made according to the fashion of the day, in its simplest, neatest form. Her features indeed bore no striking marks of beauty, but there was an irresistible sweetness in her manners, together with a countenance of such bright intelligence, that she immediately excited something beyond admiration—it was respect, interest, and esteem.

On Ellen's first entrance Miss Aubrey was seated on a stool at the upper end of the room, with one little girl upon her lap and another somewhat older leaning upon her shoulder, listening most intently to something she was reciting. She arose on perceiving Lady Warton and Ellen, but the children still clinging to her, she kissed them and as she came forward Ellen heard her promise that she would finish the story "to-morrow evening."

Much of cheerful conversation followed

the introduction of the strangers, till after tea, when Mr. Seymour being announced, Herbert and Ellen ran forward to give him the earliest greeting; he took a hand of each, and looking at them alternately, declared they made him feel quite an old man. "As to you, my dear Herbert," said he, "at twelve years old I proudly called you my boy, but I think at twenty I must call you brother, otherwise I shall fancy that my black hair is long in turning white."

"Any name," replied Herbert, "that binds me nearest to your heart: but let me not relinquish the tie which has so long endeared us as son to father."

"Well, well," answered Mr. Seymour, "either as son or brother, I may be proud of you."

Ellen here interrupted him by asking for Fanny. He replied, that she would willingly have encountered night air and accompanied him, but that as she had a cold, he had insisted on her remaining at home till the next morning, when she would make Ellen an early visit."

"No, no," said Herbert, "this is not the land of formality and etiquette, and therefore we will all go to her, as soon as Lady Warton will set us at liberty, for I long to see the Priory, the trees I planted there, and the little grotto, which in 'days of yore,' I thought a fine specimen of my own architecture."

"Not forgetting the painted window," returned Mr. Seymour, "which still remains a specimen of your early mischief; "but," added he, looking at Louis, "your head is so full of days 'lang syne,' that you have not introduced me to your friend; however, make up for your remissness, and all three of you come and dine with me to-morrow."

To this Lady Warton would not accede, but proposed their going in the morning to fetch Fanny to spend the day at the Hall: this was accordingly promised, and the prayer bell ringing Mr. Seymour took his leave; the rest of the party retired to the oratory, where every member of the household was assembled as one little flock, to

praise the same great Shepherd, whose gracious providence had thus brought them to the close of another day. Lady Warton read the service with that serious devotion which must ever arrest the attention, if not impress the mind of the hearers, with a sense of the important duty in which they were engaged. This was concluded by the evening hymn, accompanied by Miss Aubrey on the organ; and as Ellen listened to the "solemn song of praise," she thought that never had she felt less of gloom or more energy of soul. Each then retired for the night, and as Herbert gave his sister her candle, he said, "Well, Ellen, there is nothing so very tedious or melancholy in being shut up in an oratory for one half hour, is there?"

"No," replied Ellen, "I never felt less melancholy in my life; however, say what you will, brother, the *world* would notwithstanding call us a set of methodists."

"In the '*world without souls*' that might be the case," said Herbert smiling, "but here Ellen, as at St. Foy, we may live as

beings accountable for a greater purpose than to follow the mere fashions of a day, as if this life were to end an existence, for which the christian looks beyond the grave as an everlasting portion."

Ellen, who had both sense and feeling, knew this to be a truth, but having confidently assured Caroline Herbert, that she would never enter into the spirit of "over righteousness," she was now ashamed to confess the superiority of happiness enjoyed by such a family as Lady Warton's, though she felt an inward conviction that a life of holiness is alone a life of peace.

The next morning she arose full of anxious curiosity to see Fanny Seymour, who six years before had been the fondest associate of her childhood. Ellen had not been tutored in a fashionable school-room, without learning the full value attached to a fine figure, elegant manners, and superficial accomplishments; and a feeling of vanity came across her, when she thought of the difference of her education and that of a country parson's daughter. She therefore

expected to see in Fanny an awkward illiterate girl, who had no taste beyond that of a pretty flower garden and a neat farm yard, and no mind for any enjoyment but that of teaching a few chubby children a, b, c, without a thought beyond the village of Llanvair, and without a wish beyond that of going to Heaven. With this she sighed at the perspective now before her, of passing six long months confined to a companion and pursuits so opposite to those of the last five years. Fanny's letters indeed had all been expressive of a cultivated understanding and a feeling heart, but Caroline had always condemned them as completely those of a country vicar's daughter, "who generally learns the knack of writing well," because obliged to write for her parents, supposed to be too poor to hire a curate for all the *petty duties* of village accounts, copying sermons, and similar occupations.—Ellen therefore looked forward to a renewal of intimacy with Fanny with something of doubtful foreboding, pleased only in the idea of witnessing her astonish-

ment at her own superior attainments, and in the hope of making Louis at last confess that there *was* a charm in something beyond simplicity. With these thoughts passing in her mind, she bestowed more than usual pains in the choice of her dress; a circumstance not lost to the penetration of Herbert, who forbore noticing it, that she might be left to her own guidance.

Immediately after breakfast the young people went, according to appointment, to visit St. Llenard's. Neither Mr. Seymour nor Fanny was at home, but had left word that they would soon return, if the gentlemen and Miss Irwyn would in the mean time amuse themselves either with books or music. Ellen thought that Caroline would not have done so, but "*she* had a warm heart." They were however ushered in a small drawing-room, where every thing was arranged with elegant simplicity; several paintings both in oils and water-colors ornamented the walls, baskets of fresh flowers were dispersed on little tables, and a neat piano completed the comforts of the

room. The paintings attracted Herbert's attention, but what was his surprise on seeing them bear the initials F. S. "Surely," said he, "Fanny cannot be the artist of these?"

"Oh! no," replied Ellen, "I do not think she can draw, nor do I believe she can play; and yet," added she, looking at a stand of music, "here are Handel's oratorios, and several vocal pieces; but who can have taught her to sing?"

"Nature, my dear Ellen," replied Louis, "who perhaps may be the best instructress." Further reply was prevented by the entrance of Fanny; she ran in with that artless delight, which is not to be checked by the presence even of a stranger, and affectionately embracing Ellen, and giving her hand to Herbert, she with tears of joy sparkling in her bright blue eyes, assured them how sincerely she hailed their return to their native country, and a renewal of those happy days which in childhood they had so often shared together. Ellen, who had anticipated so different a reception, was touched

by the affectionate remembrance of her friend, and ashamed of the injustice she had done her, exclaimed as pressing her hand, "I wish I had never left you, Fanny."

Herbert witnessed the impression thus made on his sister, with feelings of gratitude and delight; it was what he had both expected and wished, and he hailed it as a promise of future improvement. Fanny apologized for her apparent indifference to them in being absent on their arrival, saying that she had called to visit a poor child suddenly seized with convulsions, and pleasure had necessarily given place to duty.

Herbert then remarked the growth and altered appearance of each since they last parted, and said that he supposed Fanny could scarcely remember any thing about him.

"Indeed, Herbert," said she with unaffected simplicity, "I remember every thing about you, though truly you are somewhat altered since you used to be my play-fellow and helpmate in all difficulties; but your countenance is what it was, and your heart,

I am sure, is not changed, therefore why should you expect mine to be so? But here comes my dear father," added she, looking at the window from whence she saw him, "and he amongst us again, Herbert, we shall almost forget that we have not our evening lessons to repeat, of 'Who was the founder of the Persian Empire?' 'Why was Moses prevented reaching the happy Canaan?'"

Mr. Seymour now joined them, and entered into their retrospective visions with as much pleasure as if he had been equally a sharer in them. "Don't you remember," was a sentence echoed a thousand times from one to the other, till the very past almost seemed to live again in the present. Mr. Seymour then proposed showing them the improvements in the garden, and Herbert exclaimed, "To the grotto—I must see the grotto." Fanny blushed as she said, "You will find it somewhat metamorphosed since it was our banquetting room, where Ellen and I have prepared many a feast of raspberries and milk against the return of our young mountaineer."

"Into what shall we now find it metamorphosed," asked Herbert, "I hope all my fine shell work is not quite annihilated, or have you converted it into a Minerva's temple, which we once talked of, and placed the heads of Socrates and Newton to guard the entrance, as emblems of patience and perseverance?"

"Oh! no, indeed," replied Fanny, "nothing so classical, I assure you; it is a very hiding place of litter, and only filled with oils and paints of every color and description."

"It will tell tales, however, and perhaps inform us who is the artist of these drawings," said Herbert, pointing to the wall, "whose name has been a riddle to us."

"It is a very simple one" replied Fanny, "to puzzle so wise a head; but come, I long to show you a thousand things, which, I am sure you will recognize as old friends." So saying she again put on her bonnet, and taking Ellen's hand led the way towards the grotto; Mr Seymour detaining Louis as his companion, anxious to show him a favo-

rite mount, from which, he said, was a view that had often been compared to a miniature resemblance of Switzerland.

Thus was each delighted in the different associations which the day excited, and they returned to Llanvair after a long morning's absence, happy in each other, and pleased with every thing about them; while Herbert was not a little proud of displaying to Louis the comforts of his native peasantry, and the advantages which the parish enjoyed in having such a pastor as Mr. Seymour.

"But according to your statement," said Louis, "this is one of the few portions of the earth privileged to retain something of primitive innocence, consequently Mr. Seymour can have found little sin to wash away."

"I beg your pardon," answered Herbert, "I have heard my poor father and Lady Warton say, that previously to Mr. Seymour's settling here, the poor people were left in total ignorance by his predecessor, a most careless indolent man:—but the girls

are calling us, what have they found for us to see?" so saying, the young men left their moralizing and St. Llenard's hill.

Mr. Seymour was indeed all that Herbert had so proudly described him. He was one, who under the advantages of a most excellent and pious tutor, had early imbibed the strictest principles of the only orthodox doctrine, as it is taught in the gospel of our Saviour; and in taking upon himself the awfully responsible office of a minister, felt that it was a charge requiring much self-denial, much trust on Divine assistance, and a constant vigilance over his own heart, that he might lead the little flock over whom he was appointed shepherd, not only by preaching their duties, but by the influence of his own example.

The parish of Llanvair had fallen into his charge from the hands of a Mr. Jones, who was one of those rectors, who, residing some miles from his church, thought his duty *well performed*, and all the claims of his parishioners duly answered, by riding over

to Llanvair every Sunday morning, reading the service with an "audible and loud voice," and closing his weekly duty with a "good moral sermon." He generally entered the little church "full late," and at the conclusion of the service, after speaking a few words to Lady Warton, and a word or two to the clerk, he would as hastily ride off again to be in time for a "good dinner." For the rest, he reconciled himself with the consideration that Lady Warton was really so very good, and took such pains with the poor, that she literally left him nothing in the parish to do. "All this she did, but still she found her own exertions very ineffectual to counteract the lax principles with which Mr. Jones misled the minds of his simple hearers. She therefore deeply lamented his indolence, and although she was too cautious in exposing him to the discontent of his parishioners, ever to make him a subject of discussion amongst them, yet she often wished that he was one who would go hand in hand with her, in influencing the poor people to

embrace all those ordinances established for their use and benefit.

On the death of Mr. Jones, the living fell into the hands of one of those rich divines, who, although glad to accept it as a pretty addition to an already large fortune, thought a Welsh parish need claim little of his time or attention, if he could get a curate at a reasonable rate. His patron he knew was interested in a young collegian just entering into orders, he therefore thought that he might as well suit his own convenience, and return the obligation received from Lord Rowerth; by conferring one on his protegé; consequently, although a stranger to his principles, he immediately offered Mr. Seymour the curacy of Llanvair, which was thankfully accepted, and in a few years he became its rector, a Deanery falling to the former incumbent.

The arrival of Mr. Seymour at such a period was therefore like a refreshing shower, as much to Lady Warton as to the village of her solicitude; and as he decidedly objected to reside out of the parish he was thus to watch over, the Priory of St. Lle-

nard's, a romantic glen, adjoining Llanvair, which for years had been shut up, was prepared for his reception, and ever afterwards looked what it had never looked before—the respectable residence of a respectable clergyman. His exertions to improve the habits, and to promote the true interests of his people, were indefatigable and consistent; so that they were at last rewarded with success, and his pious exhortations not only listened to with patient reverence, but received with thankfulness, and an earnest desire of following the precepts he enjoined. Thus he became completely the father of his people, while Lady Warton was their patroness, and Fanny the teacher of the young, and comfort of the infirm and sick. Under these advantages little seemed wanting to complete the happiness of Llanvair, for there were but few amongst them, who were not satisfied with their own lot, thankful for the blessings they enjoyed, or patient when those blessings might be withheld. Such was the school in which Fanny had been reared; she was

the first and dearest in her father's heart, yet solicitous for her eternal welfare, he had not lavished upon her any of those superfluous luxuries, too often bestowed upon an only child. Her education had been a source of amusement and delight to him, in those hours which in so secluded a village, might otherwise have been lonesome and tedious. He had himself received a polished education; and possessed of great talents, he was quite competent to instruct his daughter in the more essential attainments of a cultivated mind. He knew that in all probability her life would be passed in retirement, and therefore endeavoured to store her mind with such information as might always furnish her with resources against indolence or ennui. Music she had learnt as a recreation to occupy those leisure hours which nothing more essential might claim. In painting she had early evinced so much genius, that her father had permitted her to bestow more time on its cultivation than he otherwise would have done; and though she never had received any other than his

instructions, she had taken many views about Llanvair, which would have done credit to a more professed artist. Yet there was nothing striking in her talents; she was more informed than accomplished, more steady than brilliant. She inherited all the sweetness of her mother's mild and benevolent disposition, so that she was universally beloved, and was now, not only the solace of her father's life, but the companion and sharer of his pursuits, his cares, and his enjoyments. Ellen, who had expected to meet so different a girl in Fanny Seymour, was not a little astonished, as every hour developed some new charm, which diffidence at first concealed; but humbled in herself, she only now felt how illiberal she had been in forming the estimate of a "country girl."

Mrs. Warton in a few days after her arrival at Llanvair, received a letter from her niece, requesting that she would not delay going to her, as she was still extremely unwell and her youngest child ill with the measles. This determined Mrs. Warton

to proceed northward immediately, and as misfortune claimed the sacrifice, Lady Warton would not press her remaining; early, therefore, on the third day of her arrival, she left Llanvair sincerely regretted by all the party.

The young people were now thrown constantly together; day after day, some new scheme of pleasure was formed to visit their favorite hills. Nor was Berwyns forgotten, but as the family to whom it belonged was seldom there, it looked a melancholy picture to those who had known it more cheerfully tenanted; so that they only once ventured to visit it, as if it had been the grave of some departed friend!

Miss Aubrey had been interested in Ellen, by Lady Warton, and finding on a nearer acquaintance, how much of good preponderated over evil, she had anxiously seized every opportunity of leading her to love the one and to dread the consequences of the other. This she endeavoured to do by gentle and affectionate admonition; and Ellen, who was always grateful for any so-

licitude towards her, soon learnt to look on Miss Aubrey as her "best friend." To gain the influence she desired to obtain over Ellen, she had studied her pursuits, that bending in some degree, to share them with her, she might, unperceived, gradually raise her to a higher standard of duty. For this she played and sang duetts with her, and became herself a pupil in learning Ellen's favorite style of drawing in chalks. In return, Ellen was to read Scott's Bible, for an hour every day, to visit the poor people with her, and assist in cutting out clothes for their use. At first she found this a very irksome uninteresting task; the poor people "were dirty," and their rooms so close that it made her head ache, to sit in them; or the "wood smoke would make her pelisse smell like a charity school for a month afterwards;" yet Miss Aubrey never appeared to notice these remarks, but only endeavoured the more earnestly to render the duty pleasing, by relating anecdotes of the different cottagers, to amuse and gain the interest of Ellen's heart. Nor was

Fanny less desirous of promoting her best interests; she took her to the school, which was now conducted on Miss Aubrey's plan, and the little district of poor people, who all claimed her as their benefactress. "I wish," said Ellen, one morning when Fanny was thus displaying the "glories" of her village, "that Caroline Herbert would establish such a school and let me take half of the teaching."

"No doubt she would," replied Fanny, "if she knew the benefits attached to it; therefore, when you return, cannot you propose it, and take the first trouble of it upon yourself?"

"Oh no, said Ellen, with a sigh, we have no time at Lymington for teaching others, we have so much to learn ourselves. Here, Fanny, you can do your duty, for every one encourages you in it, and then you have no governess to make you practise the piano three hours every day, and the harp, and Italian, and waltzing,—all these are useless here, but at Durnford I believe they are thought the most essential things of life."

"Oh! Ellen, and can such a life be thought a happy one by any rational being, who has higher interests to obtain than any so fleeting, so valueless, and too often—so cirminal?"

"No, indeed," replied Ellen mournfully, "I often think it any thing but happy; and yet in the world we must be sometimes guided by its customs. Here, you may be peaceful and contented, for you have only to follow the path of duty, but indeed, Fanny, in England, duty is a difficult task to perform; its very name would almost expel you from fashionable society, and if, like you, we were there seen teaching poor children to sing psalms, on a Sunday evening, we should be laughed at as Methodists, and be so scrutinized that every little fault we committed, or every sigh we uttered for the next twelvemonth, would be imputed to the *crime* of "Over righteousness."

"How then," asked Fanny, "can dear Mrs. Warton live as a blessing to her little village, in the strict fulfilment of her duty, with impunity?"

"Oh! because she is old and may therefore do as she likes—besides, she *is* a methodist."

"And truly, Ellen, may she feel happy, who, in a world such as you represent, can, for conscience sake, bear the reproach which falls on a Christian's name; tenfold then shall be her reward! and Oh, how thankful ought *I* to be, who am placed in a sphere of so little temptation, where, as you truly say, duty lies only as a flower in my path, and yet how aggravated is the sin of leaving one command neglected, where I can have nothing to prevent the due fulfilment of them all. Ellen, let me entreat you, as you value your eternal welfare, now to accept the privileges granted you, and while you are here, endeavour to cultivate such a habit of duty, as, when you return, life shall seem joyless to you without its ties.'

Miss Aubrey loves you, Ellen, and from her you may learn every thing that is good."

"How can Miss Aubrey love me," said

Ellen, "for I am sure I am very unlike her?"

"Because she knows, dear Ellen, that you have the *desire* of becoming all we wish; and with a little steadiness of principle, and a firm reliance on the assistance of the Almighty, you will be blest with success."

"But even here," said Ellen, "I am an idle person, and if I had the care of any of the poor people, I could do no good; for I should not know what to say to them, and they would not mind me, for I can have no influence over them."

"You shall have a district to-morrow," said Fanny, after a moment's thought, "and do not say you can have no influence, that is in the hands of every human being, though, I believe, no gift is so neglected and abused. But now, Ellen, you can really serve me essentially, for at some distance from hence is a poor girl who is a dreadful sufferer; she is in a decline, and needs all the support we can administer, for, her mother having a large family, she has few comforts around her, and yet she is truly an example of pa-

tience; henceforth she shall be your charge, and to-morrow you shall go with me, and I will give you that, and two other cottages adjoining, as a little district; only remember, it is a responsible office," added Fanny, smiling, "for if it be neglected, the blame will all fall on my poor shoulders in choosing so bad an agent."

This seemed quite a delight to Ellen, who promised to do her best; "only," said she, "don't tell Miss Aubrey, and then I will, some of these days, give her an agreeable surprise, and take her to see *my* invalid and *my* little district."

She then followed Fanny to the Priory, to receive further instructions, all impatient to be invested with the full power of her agency. Fanny therefore took her to a little store-room, neatly arranged with jars and canisters bearing tickets of arrow-root, sago, rice, tea, and other articles of comfort; "this," said she, "is entirely for the poor people: I must give you a book for your district, and when any man, woman, or child, in your charge, falls sick, you must enquire

what they want, and according to the directions of the doctor, who is seldom any other than Johnson, you must give what they demand, and insert it in your book. This enables us to keep clear accounts, and to know exactly the expenses of the sick. To Johnson, devolves the care of the medicines, which are regulated in the same manner. "And here," added Fanny, taking a small book from the shelf, "is a collection of prayers for the sick; for in administering to your poor sufferers temporal alleviations, you must not fail to close your visit by reading one of these, which you must choose according to circumstances; for we can do little of ourselves, without the attendant blessing of the Almighty, and both the giver and receiver of benefits must be taught to know to whom alone the praise is due."

Ellen thought this was rather a formidable part of the task, but she felt the truth of Fanny's argument, and therefore determined to do her duty. She then enquired by whom these expenses were defrayed? Fanny told her that she received many liberal

subscriptions, for different charities, from the neighbouring families; "and these," said she, "generally supply our demands; but whenever a season of peculiar sickness occurs, which, I am thankful to say, is seldom the case, I always find a purse in grandmamma's pocket, to make up all deficiencies."

Ellen now took her leave and returned to the hall, full of animation and pleasure at the thoughts of being at last of some consequence, and invested with so sacred and profitable an office. Herbert remarked her smiling rosy countenance as she entered the drawing-room; and Louis said that he supposed a letter from Caroline had excited such a glow of pleasure.

"For once, Louis, you are widely mistaken; it is simply the pure atmosphere of Llanvair which makes me feel and look so happy," replied Ellen, conscious of now tasting that peace of mind which attends the wish of doing well; and, thought she, "if Louis did but know why my heart is light, he would not sigh and look so grave."

The next morning, at the usual hour, Miss Aubrey tuned her harp, to give Ellen her accustomed lesson, but was surprised on finding it declined, on the plea of being too busy, having an appointment with Fanny. Miss Aubrey then said that she would accompany her, but Ellen, with a look of great importance answered, "Oh no, indeed you must not, for I am on a secret embassy, which will admit of no witnesses, and therefore farewell till dinner time." So saying, she was about to leave the room, when Miss Aubrey, who, as Fanny was in the secret, guessed the errand was a good one, retained the hand of Ellen a moment in her own, and said, "God be with you"—but it was said in a tone of such anxious affectionate solicitude, that the words sunk deep into Ellen's susceptible heart, tears filled her eyes, and as she closed the door she thought "how easy, how delightful is duty! I am determined always to do what is right!"—Alas, it was this very security in herself, which, at the moment of reaching the entrance of her goal, drove her from its threshold, and

left her again to her own weakness, on which she always too fearlessly, too confidently relied; for religion, which she now believed she had attained, is not a toy that we can take or leave at will, as circumstances shall make it convenient for us: it is a flower which can bear no transplanting, it can feed only on one soil—gradual is its growth—and slow to bud, its blossom is everlasting!—nor can principle—the beacon which guards our frail barks from the quicksands of the world—be raised at our command, as a mere bauble to amuse and please the eye: its light must be constant and steady, and the darker our night, so must it emit a brighter flame!—But Ellen thought that she was *religious*, because she felt happy in doing well, and she fancied that *principle* actuated her conduct, because she so willingly left her favorite harp to meet the novelty of visiting a poor girl! Ellen believed all this—yet she was not deceitful—she was self deceived!

She found Fanny already prepared for her excursion, who, taking a basket in her hand

and some tracts, led Ellen to St Llenard's hill, on the descent of which stood three small old cottages. Fanny, gently tapping at the door of one, entered, and enquired of a respectable looking woman, who was washing, how Susan was.

"Thank ye, Miss, she is no better at all, but will ye please to walk up," said the poor woman, tears filling her eyes, which she endeavoured to conceal by wiping a broken chair for Ellen to sit down.

"We will both go up," replied Fanny, "if you do not think we shall be too much for Susan; Miss Irwyn is come to see her, as she wishes to visit her very often; perhaps you may remember her Mrs. Elliot, the young lady who used to live at Berwyns?"

"What, Squire Irwyn's young lady! aye, that I do, though to be sure she's grown out of knowledge, but I am glad to see you, Miss," said she, turning to Ellen, "and I'm sure Susan will, for the first bit of work she ever did to be proud of, was a shift for 'little Miss;'—aye, I wish my poor master was alive and at Berwyns

now, but God's will be done"—and so saying, she opened a door leading to a dark stair-case, and pointing up, added, "do ye walk up, Miss, and thank ye kindly for coming,"

Fanny led the way, well accustomed to the "rugged flight," but Ellen only scrambled after her, and thought it was "very close."

They entered the little dark room, which was as neatly arranged as the circumstances of its owners would admit; on a low bed was a young woman, evidently in the last stage of a decline, supported only by a pillow and a truss of straw behind it. She endeavoured to raise herself as Fanny approached her, but was prevented by a deep cough. Ellen shrunk back as if frightened, for she had never seen such a spectacle before, but Fanny, with a cheerful voice, bade her sit down on the little stool near the window, and then turning to the poor sufferer said, I am afraid, Susan, you are not much better since I saw you on Monday?"

"No Miss," replied the girl, "I think I get weaker every day; but I thank God, I

don't suffer more pain than I did."

"Can you sleep better at night?"

"Oh no, Miss, I am worse at nights, my cough is so bad;" but I should'nt mind it, if it did'nt wake mother so, for you see, Miss, we are obliged to sleep all in this room, and I can't help coughing."

"Your Mother only feels for you, Susan, I am sure, replied Fanny; but have you no one to sit up, now you are so ill—your sisters could take it by turns surely?"

"I know they would, Miss, for every body is good to me, but it would make me feel worse if I kept any one from her bed. To be sure, when they are all asleep, I think the time hangs very heavy; but then I say those nice hymns you taught me, and I think how good God is to me, for I know he hears and comforts me, when 'I cry in the night season.'"

"And what a blessing, Susan, that God is a Father to you, and to all, for he never 'slumbers nor sleeps,' but while you call upon Him in faith, He sends a comforter to you now, and prepares better things for you in Heaven; and the morning will soon

come, my poor girl, when there will be no more weeping for those who now trust in the promises of God."

"Ah Miss," said Susan, with an animated countenance, "that is what I think of, when I lie in such pain, for 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and though 'worms destroy my body,' yet, if I die in Christ, I shall live with Him for ever, for he hath redeemed me and saved me from the wrath to come."

Here she was so exhausted, that Fanny would not let her go on, but seeing that she looked tired and yet could not turn herself, she gently raised her and said, you shall rest upon my shoulder, Susan, and Miss Irwyn will read to us any chapter you like."

She chose the 42nd Psalm, and the 5th of James. Fanny therefore gave the book to Ellen; and while she looked out the chapters, she changed the position of the poor girl.

Ellen looked up surprised on seeing Fanny so fearlessly raise that corpse-like figure upon her arm, for she had been obliged to untie her bonnet, really sick from the close-

ness of the room, so unaccustomed was she to enter such a one; she did not however complain, but read what she had probably never read before. At the conclusion, Susan thanked her, and said that she should now feel comforted the whole day. Fanny replaced her gently on the pillow, and after repeating a prayer for the sick, she told Susan that Miss Irwyn would visit her very often and take her place in reading to her. Susan thanked her, and feeling refreshed by the change of position, said, she thought that she could sleep. The girls therefore took their leave, and on going down stairs, Ellen remarked to the poor woman how very ill Susan appeared. "Oh yes, indeed she is," replied Mrs. Elliot, "and she can't now feed nor turn herself, but she never says a word, nor gives any trouble." Fanny perceiving that Ellen really looked ill, and had evidently been affected by the sight of so much misery, left the cottage without touching on the subject of what had passed, but going into the two adjoining, she, with a cheerful voice, attracted

Ellen's attention to the fine rosy children who were playing. "These," said she, "are now your charge, Ellen, and I hope you will not spoil them, or I shall make you stay here the next twelvemonth, to mend all your own mischief."—She then proposed a run down the hill to Johnson's cottage, which, together with the fine fresh air, soon restored Ellen both to color and cheerfulness. She had seen only one object of misery, but many of happiness and contentment; and while she saw Fanny greeted wherever she went by the blessings of the poor, she could not but envy her those peaceful days which seemed to be her portion. Just as they were leaving Johnson, Herbert and Louis joined them; the former taking the basket from Fanny, said, "always upon ministerial duty! for the first six hours of the day there's no catching sight of you."

"Aye," replied Fanny, "but Ellen has been the ostensible person to day, I only her clerk."

"Or rather," interrupted Ellen, "you

have been Bishop bestowing blessings, I only your chaplain. No wonder, Louis, you look surprised that Fanny should have elected one so unfit for the office."

"I am not surprised," replied Louis, affectionately taking her hand under his arm, "that Fanny should think you fit for any office you choose to undertake, my dear Ellen, for I believe that you may be led to any thing that is right. Why then leave the sacred path of happiness you are so capable of enjoying—nor is there one more capable than yourself of bestowing it upon others."

Ellen walked on in silence, somewhat confused at the tone of seriousness with which Louis had addressed her. He often reproved, but rarely praised her, one word therefore of encouragement from him was the more valuable. She was not indeed ignorant of the partiality with which he had always regarded her, and during his frequent visits at the Hermitage, his approbation or displeasure had become more and more objects of interest; and though she

despaired of ever obtaining that esteem, which he seemed to bestow only on more deserving characters, she loved to please him as her brother's friend."

Louis had indeed long felt an interest in her welfare, amounting to something more than that of a disinterested person. Her early talents, and the unconscious simplicity with which she possessed them, had first charmed him into the belief that such a disposition would one day form a character of no common brilliancy; and while his romantic mind formed a fairy vision for the future, he ventured to attempt the dangerous and "delightful task," of rearing her young mind according to the model of his own fancy. Thus music, singing, drawing, and astronomy, became pursuits of mutual interest, and while during the first three years of his residence near her he fondly watched the growing influence of his will over her inclinations, he hailed her improvements as sureties of his own domestic happiness. But called away to military duties, his tutorship ended, and

too honorable to leave on her mind any impression of his attachment for her while she was so young, he would seek no promise of a continued correspondence; but fully confiding on the influence of his wishes over her, he left her, under the certain conviction, that in a few years he might return and claim her by a nearer and dearer tie. He therefore ventured, more than once to expatiate on her growing loveliness of disposition to his father, but at last received such a repulse, as made him tremble at the authority which would probably thus mar his brightest hopes of life, as General de Rancy warned him most seriously against forming any romantic attachments; "for," added he, in one of his letters, "you may surely seek happiness in your native country. Your mother was a Swiss, your father is one, and I expect your children will be Swiss also; think no more then of an English baby, nor let the follies of early love interfere with the more manly hopes of an honorable career; for on the peril of my utmost displeasure and of forfeiting all

claims to hereditary possessions, even of a shilling, form no alliance displeasing to the feelings of your Swiss connexions." It was at this period that his regiment was again ordered to station at Portsmouth, after a short Spanish campaign of only ten months: he therefore returned to the Hermitage, full of melancholy forebodings respecting his hopes of Ellen; but what was his surprise on finding that, in twelve short months, she had lost all that simplicity, which before had eminently marked her character, and that her artless manners were superseded by the love of display, of admiration, and of dress: he saw, indeed, that the change might be traced entirely to a mistaken education, and to the pernicious example of Caroline Herbert; but finding how easily she was led to follow the influence of evil as well as good, he yielded all his romantic hopes to the wishes of his father, and determined, since it was only making misery for himself and others, to think no more of Ellen, than as Herbert's sister. It was about that period when Her-

bert pressed him to join in the excursion to Wales, and though he would gladly, for his own sake, have declined it, yet as Herbert, the friend of his heart, was so soon going to India, and as their separation might be for ever, he could not refuse, merely in consideration of his own private feelings, to accompany him, and, for the last time, share with him the enjoyments of the ensuing summer. He resolved, however, carefully to avoid every attention to Ellen, which the name of brother might not fully justify, and in the journey to Wales he was perhaps the only one whose heart was not happy at the prospects before them. But still with all his promised philosophy, Ellen haunted him; when she sang, he had never heard so sweet a voice; if she played, he had never before heard so much soul in music; in every thing she did, he discovered a mind far above her years: and when he found how easily she was governed by the gentle influence of Miss Aubrey, and how much of self-will and of pride had been conquered in a few weeks, he thought

within himself, "if at sixteen she is all this, what may she not be at twenty?" and then again he wished he could take the guidance of such a heart into his own hands.

These thoughts were passing in his mind, when he met Ellen returning from her visit to poor Susan's cottage, blooming with the consciousness of having done well, yet humble under the sense of Fanny's superiority; and when on taking her hand he found he had been unwarily led to insinuate how much of his happiness depended upon her, he determined to cherish her affection and to endeavour to over-rule his father's prejudice against an "English baby," by the strictest fulfilment of his wishes in every other respect. With these hopes again brightening the perspective of his future life, he felt happier than he had done for some time past, and thought he had never enjoyed a walk so much as their present ramble round St. Llenard's hill.

Ellen spoke of her visit to Susan Elliot with feeling and commiseration; of Fanny Seymour and of Miss Aubrey with affection

and gratitude: yet there was nothing of display or ostentation in any thing she said—she evidently spoke from the heart, humbled in herself and generous in the praises of her friends.

The next morning a letter arrived from Caroline Herbert, which Louis gave to Ellen with a look of deep penetration, as if to mark her feelings on reading it: this was however unperceived, but after perusing it, she asked Miss Aubrey if she would like to hear a fashionable letter, and then read it aloud. It was filled with a list of engagements, of dresses, and of the admiration she had excited at a gay race ball to which she had been introduced. Miss Graham had left her, she was therefore now quite at liberty, and she concluded by saying that her Aunt, Lady Selliston, had taken Chillwood Park for a twelvemonth, and she only wished Ellen would come home, being sure that she would be moped into a complete methodist if she remained at Llanvair another month.

"If rosy cheeks and a happy counte-

nance are signs of methodism," said Herbert, "then indeed, Ellen, you are in good earnest moped into one of them."

"Oh! but I do not mind being called a methodist now," said Ellen, "I am only glad that I am away from all the gaieties of Durnford. As to plays and balls I shall never go to them again."

And why not?" asked Miss Aubrey, "I thought that you were fond of both."

"I used to be," replied Ellen, looking very grave, "but you have taught me to love better things, so I shall never go to balls again."

"Upon what principle would you refuse?" asked Miss Aubrey, "because you have already lost the taste for dancing, or is it that you think the amusement wrong?

"No, indeed," said Ellen, "I should never be tired of dancing, but I do not think it a very rational amusement for a christian."

"Indeed," replied Miss Aubrey, smiling, "upon what principle then do you think it *wrong?*"

"Oh I don't exactly know *why*," said Ellen, hesitating, "but I *do* think it wrong I believe because you do."

"You should never allow your judgment to yield to that of another, however you may love them, my dear Ellen, without being able to assign a good reason for your so doing; but in the present instance you are altogether mistaken, for I do *not* think dancing an improper amusement, nor in the least inconsistent with the principles of Christianity."

"Not think it wrong?" said Ellen, surprised, "why I have heard you say that you never go to balls nor plays, and I know that is the reason why Caroline Herbert calls you a methodist."

"Miss Herbert has never heard me condemn dancing," replied Miss Aubrey, "and though I repeat, that I would not go to a ball, yet if we were to have a dance here this very night, I could enjoy it with the youngest of the young; but *public* assemblies I think often lead to dissipation, or at least, to much levity both of thought and

conversation, which weakens, if not totally annihilates, all desire of steadier pursuits—all taste for the enjoyments of a retired home: thus a recreation innocent in itself, is become, by its *abuse*, a dangerous allurement from better principles."

"Oh! but to *you*," said Ellen, "that argument can scarcely be sufficient to prevent your going to balls; for nothing could tempt you to levity in any shape—nothing allure you from the love of duty."

"Indeed, Ellen, I wish that were true," replied Miss Aubrey gravely, "there was a time when I entered and enjoyed the dissipation of high life, and so easily was *I* led from the love of duty, that frequently have I returned from balls and plays, too much fatigued and exhausted even to find inclination to offer that sacrifice of evening praise which the great Giver of daily blessings demands from every human being! I have indeed knelt down and perhaps languidly hurried over a form of words, but the spirit of prayer was gone! the duty was become a toil, and while my listless tongue

uttered a petition to Him who is ever present with us, as first in majesty and glory! —I knew not what I asked—I heeded not to whom I prayed; for at the very moment when my lips have asked for blessings, my thoughts have wandered far from the purport of my words, while I—a very hypocrite—have only worshipped the idols of a gay and fleeting world. Such, Ellen, were the effects of dissipation upon *my* heart—can you then wonder that I should now fear to encounter the temptation which has before led me so deeply to sin?—but do not suppose that I condemn *others*, for enjoying those recreations which *I* have abused: they may be stronger than I, and with firmer principles, in the midst of evil may still preserve the good. It is the *abuse* of pleasure only, which makes it sinful."

"Then I am sure," said Ellen, "*I* ought never to taste of such; for when I have been to a dance, I have never been able to say my prayers at all, without going to sleep the moment I knelt down."

"To your own conscience then," replied

Miss Aubrey, "must be left the choice of good and evil; only act, dear Ellen, according to its dictates, and then be assured God will not leave you to your own unassisted powers."

"But what are your objections to plays," said Ellen, "for they neither expose you to late hours, nor to much fatigue; then surely is it not a very innocent recreation? and Dr. Herbert says, many an excellent moral may be gathered from the scenes of a theatre."

"And as you seem to accord with him," replied Miss Aubrey, "I ought not, perhaps, just now, to offer my opinion against his judgment—but I confess in every point of view a theatre appears to me a school in which many a moral is *sacrificed.* Perhaps there are few plays so perfectly chaste, as not to wound the delicacy of a female; this is no trifling objection, and yet it is the least: for where is the mind, which has been taught to value religion as a means of universal salvation, that can witness without feelings of pity and awful apprehension, fellow creatures not only exposed

to a precarious and arduous livelihood merely for the useless gratifications of an audience, but also to a life of temptations, from which the young actors and actresses of a country theatre can scarcely escape? It may perhaps be illiberal to judge of the private life of an individual by any *outward* appearances, yet when those appearances so directly militate against principle, the inference must surely be, that *principle* is but a secondary consideration with such as are actuated by interested motives to labor hard for the 'perishable things of life,' and to neglect 'the one thing needful' for our eternal interests."

"Do you then suppose," said Ellen, "that no actor can be religious?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied Miss Aubrey, "that I should so judge any human being; but it appears to me, that few religious persons would embrace a profession in many respects so adverse to religious pursuits."

"But I have heard you say," said Ellen, "that every good has its evil; then may not the theatre be an evil fraught with good?

for surely it exemplifies the danger of yielding to ambition, pride, and revenge."

"Certainly," replied Miss Aubrey, "whilst we are on earth every good thing must be attended with evil, but if the evil preponderate, be assured good cannot be the eventual result. The theatre indeed is a miniature resemblance of the world; but, alas! have we not in real life enough of living examples to warn us of the dangers in yielding to any ungoverned passion, whether it be ambition, revenge, or any other criminal feeling, without flying to the mere representation of them to learn the moral of their consequences? And in a *religious* point of view, can a theatre excite one sentiment of piety, when we there hear the name of God —that sacred name, at which the very devils 'believe and tremble,' lightly called upon and blasphemed? For even in plays which are called of moral tendency, take for example that simple piece the "Hunter of the Alps," the very simplicity of which might save it from the censure of a mere *refined* taste, have you not seen actors and

actresses kneel down, and with the most solemn adjurations, call upon the name of the Most High to avert ideal calamities, or implore blessings upon the very scene of such impious blasphemy? Hands which in the temple of the Lord, perhaps have seldom been lifted up to offer the sacrifice of heart-felt penitence and praise, or sought the needed pardon for daily sins, are there upraised in all the mockery of fervent *useless* prayer; and can this, Ellen, be heard by pious ears without a feeling of awful dread? Not that I believe the extent of sin thus committed is thought of, or understood by the aggressors; neither the actors nor spectators intend to do the evil they thus so heedlessly encourage; but yet in a land like England, few can find the plea of not knowing their duty, however they may be tempted to pervert it: yet, do not suppose that I would indiscriminately censure all actors and actresses. Remember I have argued on the *tendency* of a theatre, taken as a *general public evil;* for there are many who have left our stage, and many who still sup-

port it, now living, as examples of domestic excellence."

Ellen listened, deeply interested in all the arguments of Miss Aubrey; she had never before heard the subject so discussed; the entrance of Mr. Seymour and Fanny, however, prevented any further remark.

The young people now proposed a walk, but as Miss Aubrey had promised to accompany Lady Warton in a visit some miles distant, she was obliged to decline joining them. The glen of Colwan was proposed, that Fanny and Louis might take a sketch of the opposite valley. The conversation turned upon Miss Aubrey, and Louis remarked that he had never seen a woman possessed of so fine a mind.

"Indeed," replied Fanny, "I believe few are her equals, for she not only possesses a highly cultivated mind, but a heart truly devoted to christianity."

"Is she often at Llanvair," asked Herbert, "for she seems as much at home amongst its people as if it were her native place?"

"During the last four years," said Fanny, she has been almost a resident at the Hall, for Lady Warton is so fond of her, she scarcely knows how to part with her."

"Is she then a relation of Lady Warton?" said Louis.

"None whatever," replied Fanny, "though she completely supplies a daughter's place to her."

"Then I suppose she has no parents."

"She has scarcely a relation in the world," replied Fanny; "she was early left an orphan to the guardianship of an elder brother, but he is dead, and she has only a sister living in Scotland, married to a man of such opposite principles to those of Miss Aubrey, that there can be no union between them."

"She looks as if she had known happier days," said Louis, "although sadness is so much concealed under the resignation of a pious heart."

"Sorrow has indeed been her portion," replied Fanny," but truly has it been blest to her; I have heard that she was once

the gayest of the gay, surrounded by friends, by family, and by fortune; she was almost the idol of her brother, and her young sister was the very centre of all her care and affection. Of these she is now bereaved; but I believe the stroke which touched the root of happiness, was the death of a young man, to whom, after an attachment of many years, she was on the eve of being married—the blow was sudden, and it destroyed the last tie of earthly hope; but while it closed the bright vision of a happy life, it opened to her the perspective of a brighter inheritance, to which she has ever since been progressively ascending. It darkened earth, that the light of heaven might appear the more transcendent, and I believe now, it is almost the ruling principle of every thought, hope, and wish: but to form a just estimate of her worth, you must know her long, for diffidence conceals the superiority of mind and talents, which are still subservient to all the humbler duties of a simple christian."

"You have indeed drawn a lovely pic-

ture," said Louis, "but I truly believe it has not been too highly colored. I do not wonder that you value her friendship both as a privilege and pleasure, nor can you, Ellen, sufficiently appreciate the advantage of such an acquaintance."

"Oh! I do love Miss Aubrey dearly," said Ellen, "and you will see, Louis, if I do not try to become like her."

"To see you so would indeed be a day of rejoicing to me as to yourself," returned Louis, somewhat confused at having said so much; but recovering himself, he added, "all those interested in you must wish it, dear Ellen; only guard against that self-confidence which is a rock I fear you will too often split upon."

Ellen was silent, and Fanny resuming the subject, always an inspiring theme to her, said, "To me Miss Aubrey has been a friend in the fullest sense of that endearing name; for though nearly twice my age, she has always allured me to be the sharer of all her pursuits. To her I am indebted for many a happy feeling,

many a pleasing resource, and being entirely confined to the retirement of this little village, but for her I should perhaps scarcely have known the blessing of an intimate and unreserved friendship; for there are no young people in our neighbourhood with whom I could have formed such a one, and the distance which separated me from Ellen of course precluded the immediate cultivation of so near a tie."

"How dreadfully dull you must be without her," said Ellen, "for she seems so fond of you!"

"Never dull," replied Fanny, "with such a father at my side, but I confess her absence is a real deprivation to me; for during the summer months that she is here, she always takes upon herself the care of half the village, and assists me in the school, which leaves me plenty of time for the full enjoyment of painting, and then she teaches me to sing, and we play together, which is a source of as much pleasure to my father as to myself; and then she enjoys his reading to us, and nothing delights

him more than getting into a deep argument with her, though," added Fanny, smiling, "I always find that they meet precisely at the same point in the end."

She must truly be a universal loss to Llanvair; but is she never here in winter?" asked Louis.

"Oh, never!" replied Fanny, "her friends in London claim her for that season, where she generally remains till the end of May, as she likes to attend the religious associations which meet at that period; indeed she is an active supporter to many of them, particularly that for the conversion of the Jews, in which she is zealously interested."

"I declare I thought so," exclaimed Louis, smiling, "by the gentle rub she gave me last night, when I said that England only impoverished itself by attempting the conversion of other countries, and which, by the way, would have led to an interesting conversation between us had not little Althea Stacy put an end to it, by claiming Miss Aubrey to herself; but some how or

other, she seems to have time, head, and heart, for every one: but I will argue the point with her yet, for I love to see her animated."

"Well," said Ellen, "if Miss Aubrey were as much with me as she is with you, Fanny, I think I should do nothing but cry from the time she went away to the time she came back again. I should be quite miserable without her." "Then," replied Fanny, "you would convert a blessing to an evil, my dear Ellen. I hope I love her gratefully, but I do not think I ever shed many tears when she leaves me, for I know she is always where she can most essentially promote the comfort and welfare of others. I confess I feel her loss severely; but, thank God, I have ample occupation to fill every moment of my days, particularly when she is gone, as her duties here then fall into mine, and there is nothing like employment to prevent the indulgence of melancholy regrets; besides, I should be ungrateful to my father, who bestows all his winter's evenings to amuse me, when he might otherwise

dine out five days out of the seven. But here we really must divide parties; Louis and I to scramble up this narrow path-way, from which I think we may find a lovely scene for our sketches, and in the mean time Herbert had better take you to see those beautiful trees we spoke of yesterday."

Here they accordingly separated till the sketches were finished, and then returning home, they passed the remainder of the day with that cheerful harmony which must ever exist between those of united sentiments and pursuits.

Ellen from that time continued to enjoy, and steadily pursue, those daily duties into which she had entered. She punctually attended her little district, and though at first she had always taken Johnson with her in her visits to poor Susan, fearful of being alone with her lest she "should die," she now fearlessly encountered the trial without a wish for the support of a third person. She was surprised to find how much better acquainted with every part of the Bible that poor girl was than herself,

for often when Susan had requested her to read any particular parable or favorite portion, Ellen was puzzled to find out in what part of the Testament it was written. This completely humbled her pride in the superiority of those talents which she possessed, useless, compared to that first of essential attainments—the knowledge of Scripture, in which she was so perfectly ignorant, and in which that simple cottager found her greatest delight.

One day Ellen asked her if she would not like to have some book to read besides the Bible, some pretty little story that might amuse her, for that she must be very dull, so ill and yet so much alone.

"Oh no, Miss!" replied Susan, "I don't like any book so well as the Bible. Miss Fanny gave me the "Dairyman's daughter," and that was very pretty reading, but now I'm so bad, I don't think I should like any book so well as the Bible."

"And can you understand all of it?" asked Ellen.

"Oh no! I dare say I can't, not all of

it," replied Susan, "but God is very good, for He has written enough for poor people to learn as well as rich."

"And what a blessing it is, Susan, that you were taught to read."

"Yes, indeed it is, and I hope God will bless Mr. Seymour and Miss Fanny, for they take a great deal of pains to make the poor children learn, and Mr. Seymour tells us all about the Bible so plain, that we can't say that we don't know our duty. If I had never read the Bible, I should think myself very hardly done by, because I am always so sick and poor, but now I know that 'God's ways are not like ours,' but that according to His will some are rich and some are poor; but 'whosoever believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life,' since God is 'no respecter of persons.'"

"And do you never feel tired of being in bed, and wish to go out as others do?"

"Oh yes, sometimes I am very impatient, and could somehow wish to die, but I think how wicked that is, and then I remember

the words in the Bible, where God has promised that 'the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and that if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.' Now this makes me feel *very* happy, because though I have been sinful, yet I know I shall be forgiven, and though I am sick now, I shall be quite well in heaven."

To such conversations Ellen would always listen with equal astonishment and interest. If *she* only had a head-ache she was weary of the pain, and if obliged to keep her bed only one day, she was restless and miserable: yet this poor sufferer, bereaved of every earthly comfort, had been for seven long months confined to a hard bed, with scarcely a glimpse of sunshine to cheer her dark abode—and all this without a murmur, without a wish to change the will of God—and now, she could even talk of being "very happy!"

From what source then, thought Ellen, can such happiness be derived?—it is indeed "peace which passeth understand-

ing"—*peace* given "not as the world giveth," for it is such as no sickness can destroy, no sorrow can wither! Why then do I not more earnestly seek it, that when I come to die, I may be as happy as this poor girl is?"

Thus in the pursuance of duty, Ellen became cheerful: but time flew rapidly over the enjoyments of such constant and happy occupations; the long days appeared too short for the fulfilment of all their engagements; and as the period drew near for their return to England, Ellen sighed as she thought of Caroline, Herbert, and a renewal of those pursuits, which she knew would expose her to a renewal of temptations. "However," said she to herself, "they shall not allure me again to love the things of the world. I shall visit the sick at Lymington as Fanny does here, and be one of those whom Miss Aubrey says can, in the 'midst of evil still preserve the good'—then Louis shall find that *instability* is not *always*—the rock upon which I split."

END OF VOL. I.

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